LEARNING OUR HISTORIES AT KITS HOUSE – A SEARCH FOR DECOLONIZING PLACE-BASED PEDAGOGIES

by
Elizabeth Henry

B.Sc., University of Guelph, 2004

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(Adult Education)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

April 2013

© Elizabeth Henry, 2013
Abstract

This study investigates a set of decolonizing place-based pedagogies and their potential to facilitate learning among non-Indigenous learners in Kitsilano, Vancouver. I explore using neighbourhood history as a way to open dialogue about the present-day implications of colonization. In this action research project, I facilitated a series of three workshops with seven adults at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House (Kits House). I invited participants to research forgotten Indigenous, immigrant and settler histories and to share photos of what they had learned about the Westside of Vancouver. In the workshops I discussed how Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations lived, sometimes seasonally, in what is now a city park (Vanier Park), and how colonization operated to displace these Nations. As well, participants were invited to envision how to acknowledge forgotten histories in their soon-to-be redeveloped neighbourhood house. Through participant observations at the workshops and subsequent semi-structured interviews, I recorded participants’ views and what they had learned about (de)colonization, as well as, their suggestions for acknowledging histories in their new neighbourhood house.

Research findings highlight the challenges of facilitating decolonizing place-based pedagogies as a non-Indigenous facilitator, with predominately non-Indigenous learners. In the first workshop, the invitation to learn about local histories was too open-ended and allowed participants to research visitor-settler histories without understanding these histories in the context of colonization. In future workshops more attention needs to be paid to the questions posed by the facilitator to re-focus learning on the colonial relationships between Indigenous, immigrant and visitor-settlers. Although sharing stories about the colonization of Snauq / Kits Indian Reserve / Vanier Park did spark dialogue about colonization and reconciliation, these discussions did not lead to an articulated understanding of decolonization among participants. In the action-planning phase of the project, participants offered specific ideas for representing histories at Kits House, but they did not explicitly discuss decolonizing these historical narratives.

Although I set out to facilitate decolonizing place-based learning, I facilitated a smaller first step in the participants’ and my own learning journey. Based on my research findings, recommendations for refining decolonizing place-based pedagogies and suggestions for decolonizing histories at Kits House are offered.
Preface

The full Behavioural Research Ethics Board with the certificate number of H12-00822 approved this research on May 3, 2012.
Table of Contents

Abstract .............................................................................................................................................. ii
Preface .................................................................................................................................................. iii
Table of Contents ............................................................................................................................. iv
List of Tables ....................................................................................................................................... vi
List of Figures ...................................................................................................................................... vii
Glossary ............................................................................................................................................... viii
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................................... x

Chapter 1. Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
  Positioning through autobiography ................................................................................................. 1
  Research questions ............................................................................................................................ 4
  Study site .......................................................................................................................................... 5
  Significance of research .................................................................................................................... 6
  Additional background on my research ......................................................................................... 8
  My thesis at a glance ......................................................................................................................... 9

Chapter 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework ................................................................. 10
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 10
  Place-based education ....................................................................................................................... 10
  Decolonizing and indigenizing pedagogies .................................................................................... 13
  Education, learning and decolonization ......................................................................................... 14
  Pedagogy for the privileged ............................................................................................................ 15
  Summary ......................................................................................................................................... 18

Chapter 3. Methodology .................................................................................................................... 19
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 19
  Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 19
  Methods .......................................................................................................................................... 20
    Background on participants ........................................................................................................... 21
    Description of workshops ........................................................................................................... 22
  Data analysis ................................................................................................................................... 26
  Strengths and limitations of the methodology .............................................................................. 27
  Summary ......................................................................................................................................... 28

Chapter 4. Research Findings ........................................................................................................... 29
  Introduction ..................................................................................................................................... 29
  Participant understandings and perspectives .................................................................................. 29
    History .......................................................................................................................................... 29
    Reconciliation ............................................................................................................................... 31
    Colonization ................................................................................................................................. 34
    Decolonization ............................................................................................................................. 38
    Relationships with Aboriginal peoples ....................................................................................... 39
  Participant learning ........................................................................................................................... 40
    Learning local history ................................................................................................................... 40
    Learning local Indigenous histories .......................................................................................... 42
    Learning to connect with place ................................................................................................... 44
    Learning as a facilitator ................................................................................................................ 44
  Sharing history at the new neighbourhood house ......................................................................... 49

viii
Historical collage ........................................................................................................................................ 51
Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 56

Chapter 5. Discussion ................................................................................................................................ 57
Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 57
What happened in this study? ................................................................................................................... 57
Historical, place-based approaches to decolonizing pedagogies ............................................................ 59
Pedagogy for the privileged – is it a useful framework? .......................................................................... 60
Curry-Stevens’s model ................................................................................................................................ 61
Facilitating learning as a co-learner in decolonization ............................................................................. 63
‘Everything is welcome’ facilitation .......................................................................................................... 64
Understanding participants’ worldviews .................................................................................................... 65
Arising contentions ..................................................................................................................................... 67
Summary .................................................................................................................................................. 68

Chapter 6. Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 69
Introduction ............................................................................................................................................... 69
Recommendations for decolonizing place-based pedagogies ................................................................. 69
Recommendations for Kits House ............................................................................................................ 71
Significance of findings .............................................................................................................................. 74
Emerging research areas ............................................................................................................................ 75
Reflections as an action researcher at Kits House ....................................................................................... 76
Concluding reflections .............................................................................................................................. 76

References .................................................................................................................................................. 78

Appendices ................................................................................................................................................ 86
Appendix A: Interview protocol ................................................................................................................ 86
Appendix B: Resource books used in workshops ...................................................................................... 88
Appendix C: Consent form .......................................................................................................................... 90
List of Tables

Table 1: Background on study participants ................................................................. 22
List of Figures

Figure 1: Workshop 1 agenda

Figure 2: Workshop 2 agenda

Figure 3: Workshop 3 agenda

Figure 4: Collage, panel 1 (1880s-1950s)

Figure 5: Collage, panel 2 (1900s-1930s)

Figure 6: Collage, panel 3 (1960s-2010s)

Figure 7: Ten-step model of pedagogy for the privileged (adapted from Curry-Stevens, 2007).
Glossary

**Aboriginal / Indigenous**: These terms are used interchangeably to refer to people who are descendants of the original human inhabitants of a specific territory. Although ‘Aboriginal’ has a legal definition in Canada, this is not the case when used in this thesis. Both terms are used to include all peoples with ancient ancestral ties to a specific territory.

**Ally**: An ally is someone who works to change systems of oppression from which they themselves benefit. An ally often works in support of a specific group of oppressed people to whom he or she does not belong (Bishop, 2002; Leondar-Wright, 2005).

**Colonization**: This concept refers to: “a) the historical practice from the colonial era through the present of dominating other people’s territory and other people’s bodies and minds for the production of privilege maintained by military, political, and economic power, and; b) other assimilative cultural patterns (e.g. schooling or consumerism) that over-determine or restrict possibilities for people and places” (Greenwood, 2009, p. 1).

**Decolonization**: “[A]ctive resistance to the forces of colonialism that perpetuate the subjugation and / or exploitation of our minds, bodies, and lands, … for the ultimate purpose of overturning the colonial structure and realizing Indigenous liberation” (Waziyatawin and Yellow Bird, 2005, p. 2).

**(De)-colonization**: Throughout this thesis I use this term as an abbreviation to refer to colonization and decolonization.

**Racialized**: Refers to any person or group of people who are not perceived to be White. This term acknowledges the social construction of race and the assumption that Whiteness is the norm.

**Visitor-settler**: This term is used to refer to people who are not Indigenous to the territory on which they reside, work, or play. In the Canadian context I use this term to acknowledge both the
colonial settlement of lands and the fact that non-Indigenous peoples, whether cognizant or not, remain visitors on specific Indigenous territories.
Acknowledgements

First I want to acknowledge the Musqueam Nation for allowing me to be a visitor on their traditional unceded ancestral territory as I attended classes at UBC and continued to learn how to be a respectful visitor here.

Thank-you to my community of friends, family and colleagues who helped guide me along this learning journey. A special thanks goes to my parents who are my first place-based teachers and to my extended family for sharing what you knew about our great, great grandparents.

The guidance received from Dr. Pierre Walter, my advisor, and Dr. Tracy Friedel and Dr. Shauna Butterwick, my committee members, was invaluable. Thank-you to Dr. Peter Cole for being my external examiner. A big thanks to EDST for providing me financial support in my studies at UBC. To my colleagues in my two writing groups - EJ, Anthony, Ryan, Mary, fish, Alana, Julia, Amy, Rachel, Jay and Mali - I wouldn’t have stayed on track without your weekly check-ins and support.

A huge thanks to Kitsilano Neighbourhood for providing me a Neighbourhood Small Grant and to staff, especially Catherine, Emily, Nikki, Sandra, Zsuzsi and Julie, who helped me undertake this study. To those who participated in the study, I am ever grateful for your contributions to our study group and your willingness to share your ideas and join me in this research adventure. I think we had a great time and I learned a ton from all of you.

My dear friends, you are the backbone of my community. I feel lucky to have such a great group of people to pick me up when I feel like giving up. Thanks to Ilona for being there from the start of it all. Heather, Erika, Andrew, Sarah, Tomomi, Bandana, Katherine, Clare and Anita, I would have never undertook this study if it weren’t for those discussions, years ago at 197 Gordon St. And to my Vancouver friends—you’ve seen me through the thick and thin of this thesis. A special thanks to Polly, my INTJ buddy, and Zibba, the best neighbour ever, who have spent hours on the phone with me and to all my other friends—Hana, Lou, Linda, Vaughan, Ming, Alice, and Kate, who have listened to me talk about my research! To Magnus, I am grateful that you got me out skiing, kept me active until the day I handed this in, and never stopped asking me the hard questions.

A final thanks goes out to the wonderful students and professors in my classes at UBC. You helped me plant the seeds of this thesis.
Chapter 1. Introduction

Positioning through autobiography
well the story begins in a canoe about 30 years ago, in northern saskatchewan, with me being rocked to sleep as an infant. or does the story really start here? probably not. but i guess i need to start in the middle.

“I am from here”

I am from
soil
trees reaching arms into Blueness,
a sea of blue
a warm womb of water
from far away lands, never seen
yet heard on the lips of grans, uncles and aunts
I am from a question mark of ignored heritage
loving parents
from south of here, a place unloved
I am from a lake of leeches, turbid, warm waters,
of that taste or is it a smell of diesel,
yet forests, yet waters of northern forests
I am from a bottom of a canoe, rocked to sleep,
below the motherly moon
I am from this illusive yet dominant culture
and tucked away into a land of recreation –
always wondering what came before,
before I began to say I am from here.

-an excerpt from my journal in EDCP 585C, January-March 2011

i feel a number of burning questions arising from my lived experiences of place. what bothers me about place-based education? why do i care about place-based education? i love connecting to nature and the outdoors. my parents are both naturalists of some sort. for 31 years they have invited me to get to know plants, animals and ecosystems through nature studies, outdoor
recreation, food harvesting and spiritual practices. But I even get tripped up talking about this. Have they simply invited me to form a bond with nature? Are they classic eco-humanists? They certainly have read plenty of Leopold and Thoreau. How have they learned from indigenous communities in the places where we have lived? It’s like I want to have a dialogue with my parents...

Mom and dad, I’ve noticed somehow we’ve all learned a lot from different indigenous communities, especially Cree communities in northern Saskatchewan. How has this happened? Did you intentionally pass along indigenous teachings to me, in my cereal milk?

I’ve spent a lot of time in national parks, especially Prince Albert, Riding Mountain and Kluane. And I’ve visited a lot of other national parks in Canada (Banff, Jasper, Waterton, Yoho, Pacific Rim, Chilkoot Trail, Glacier, Grasslands, Bruce Peninsula, Point Pelee, Forillon and probably more). And my parents admit, at least in historical ways, that these are colonial spaces and institutions. And they’ve been friends with indigenous peoples living around these parks. Hmm. And what have they learned from their friends? Well, I certainly have heard about indigenous knowledge of the boreal forest. My dad is, among other things, a boreal forest ecologist. And he’s done a lot of getting to know this forest—especially in Saskatchewan and the Yukon. But he’s also learned from elders like John Hastings, Betty and Ahab and many more about Cree names and stories related to this home forest.

Maybe what bothers me is the hybridity of my experiences of places. I want it to be cut and dry. It all leaves me wondering where I am indigenous to?

Here’s the story in brief. I know my dad’s ancestors came from Ireland to Michigan and Ohio. They began working in the steel mills. I don’t know much about who they were before they came to the USA other than some were Fitz Henrys until they came to America to become Henrys. Others were Morans, Scanlons and Sullivans. But what specific ways did they begin to become rich over the generations? By the time my dad was born something had shifted. How did this happen? How did race, class, colonization allow them to climb the capitalist ladder? And my mom’s ancestors? The Vallieres and Valcourts originally came from France over to Quebec. When? I don’t know, but
in the late 1800s they moved to the usa, specifically new england, to find work in the textile mills. then my grandfather put a stop to talking french to climb the capitalist ladder. and there were the bergquist, buxton, borchard folks who came from sweeden, england/germany and germany. the bergquists immigrated from sweeden to buffalo, ny in about 1848. the buxtons were farmers from hamburg. my great grandparents lived in buffalo so i guess that’s where the buxtons and borchards all went. who are the indigenous peoples of ireland, france, germany, england, and sweeden? and who are the indigenous peoples of new york, michigan, ohio, quebec and new england? hmm even with a little google search a lot comes up. seneca peoples of the buffalo area, fox and sauk peoples of the detroit area (native languages of the americas, 2012) -- a reminder of the ongoing nature of colonization in many different lands. it’s a long story.

after learning about my ancestors, i am left with wondering how many of them would have been indigenous to the european countries they left behind. why did they leave? were they facing some kind of oppressive living conditions in their homelands? is this why they were lured by the english and french ruling classes’ calls to start a life in a new land, supposedly empty of ‘civilization’? or were they well-off with the capacity to immigrate to an even ‘better life’? there’s so much more i’d like to understand about the social context of my own immigration stories. i need to understand why i am living on someone else’s land, all along thinking it was my own, growing up in canada.

yeah, i guess partly i am trying to understand my own relationship to colonization, colonial history and decolonization struggles past, present and future. and this leads me to my questions of being a ‘long-term visiting’-settler place-based educator. the tension goes something like this – i’d like to do place-based education, but it’s on land that has a history. that history includes my ancestors coming here and stealing land from indigenous peoples who didn’t believe that they owned the land, but that they belonged to the land (chin et. al., 2011). i’m also such a place-based doer so i wonder - what does it matter if i learn my personal colonization history? wouldn’t it be better to learn about a place history, relevant to more than just me?

and this is how my research began...
This opening narrative is an experimental attempt to position myself in my research. I have written the narrative without conventional grammar to indicate that I am writing a stream of consciousness, a departure from standard academic writing, to share how I came to do this research. As well, I am playing with language and considering whether it is possible to decolonize my use of written English as part of my research into decolonizing pedagogies. My opening narrative style is informed by the writings of Peter Cole and Pat O’Riley where they use Coyote and Raven to narrate theoretical discussions (see Cole and O’Riley (2010) for an example). Although my thesis does not use narratives to the same extent as Cole and O’Riley’s writings, I am exploring the potential of decolonizing the structure and voice used in parts of my thesis.

Research questions

My research explores how visitor-settlers participate in decolonizing place-based learning within the context of what is now referred to as Vancouver. Specifically I examined how learning Indigenous, settler and immigrant histories in a person’s own neighbourhood can contribute to decolonizing place-based learning. In my study I explore the following overarching research question: how can decolonizing place-based pedagogies encourage visitor-settlers to learn about colonization, engage in forms of decolonization and become supportive allies in Indigenous struggles for sovereignty? I answered this question by exploring three sub-questions of inquiry at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House (Kits House). Background on Kits House and my rationale for working at this study site is outlined after the research questions. The questions guiding my research at Kits House were as follows:

1) What are the understandings of participating members of their relationship to neighbourhood history, colonization, decolonization and reconciliation?
2) How, and what, do Kits House members learn through their participation in historical place-based education dialogues?
3) How do members envision sharing ignored, forgotten and erased histories in their new neighbourhood house?

I facilitated a series of three historical decolonizing place-based workshops, followed by community member interviews, to answer these questions.
Study site
Kitsilano Neighbourhood House is a friendly neighbourhood place. People of all ages and cultures come together to enjoy programs and services that make the Westside a healthy, safe and vibrant community in which to live and do business. Kits House is a non-profit registered charitable organization providing services on the Westside of Vancouver from Granville Street to UBC, from Musqueam to Cornwall Street. (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2012a, sidebar).

Kits House is the only neighbourhood house on Vancouver’s Westside and hence has a large service area, as described in the previous website excerpt. However, it is important to acknowledge that Kits House currently works in an area of unsettled territories with multiple Nations, Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, having a history in the area now referred to as the Westside of Vancouver.

The excerpt from Kitsilano Neighbourhood House’s website succinctly describes the organization’s vision. Kits House is part of an umbrella organization called the Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC (Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC, 2011) and it is located in Vancouver. Neighbourhood houses aim to build strong communities, which are inclusive of many different ages and backgrounds. Specifically neighbourhood houses, “function as resource centers with the flexibility to meet changing community needs and challenges” (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2011a). In other words, they are volunteer-driven community service agencies that offer their members a range of participation opportunities from attending programs to helping plan and deliver programs (Association of Neighbourhood Houses of BC, 2010-2011).

Originally opened as an orphanage in 1894, Kits House became a neighbourhood house in 1972, and began operating in its current location at Vine Street and West 7th Avenue (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2011a). According to Kits House’s Strategic Plan, the communities served by Kits House are from increasingly diverse ethno-cultural and economic backgrounds. As well, the Westside has a high number of senior residents (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2011b). Kits House provides programs aimed at different groups of Westside residents, with current programs including: Building Welcoming Communities (for newcomers), childcare, family programs, food security initiatives, older adults and seniors
programs, support groups and youth programs (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2012b). Kits House members pay an annual membership fee of $1 (volunteers), $5 (individual), or $10 (family) to support community programming (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2011a). Programs are also supported through government grants, foundations, and donations (Kitsilano Neighbourhood House, 2012c, see www.kitshouse.org/get-involved/sponsors/ for sponsors).

I chose Kits House as my study site for several reasons. First, as a place-based educator I wanted to learn more about the neighbourhood in which I lived and I wanted to teach from a location of personal connection. Specifically, I live two blocks away from Kits House and had already attended several of their community events before I became a graduate student. Second I had previously worked at Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House in East Vancouver and had some knowledge of the mandate of Neighbourhood Houses, which would allow me to understand my study site in more depth. Third, I participated in two concurrent community service-learning courses and completed a service-learning project with Kits House January-April 2011. My thesis research expands on the original relationships I formed with Kits House staff through the semester-long research project I completed in 2011.

**Significance of research**

My research contributes to identifying new decolonizing place-based pedagogies for non-Indigenous learners. I acknowledge that many Indigenous and allied non-Indigenous educators are contributing to decolonizing pedagogies across several educational disciplines (see Chapter 2). My aim is to specifically build upon their work by expanding these pedagogies within the domain of place-based education. Although decolonizing place-based education is an emerging research field, this is a relatively new field of study. My research will further define decolonizing pedagogies that will help adults decolonize their learning through place-based studies.

Specifically my research will contribute to understanding alliance building within the context of place-based pedagogies. Although I have read activist and academic writings on how to become an ally (Leondar-Wright, 2005; Bishop, 2002; Curry-Stevens, 2007), I have rarely encountered the concept of alliance building within the place-based education literature. Yet, I have become interested in ally decolonization work through my own experiences as a place-based learner, and later as a place-based educator. I think place-based learning offers a unique opportunity to engage visitor-settler peoples in discussions on colonization precisely because it is linked to a specific locality. My research will expand on place-based pedagogy to explore how it
could be a facilitator of alliance building and in some cases a form of ‘pedagogy for the privileged’ (Curry-Stevens, 2007), in which visitor-settlers learn to decolonize and support Indigenous-led sovereignty movements.

As an action research project, my study will specifically contribute to program planning ideas at Kits House. This neighbourhood house is undergoing redevelopment and is expected to open a new building in 2013. As part of the redevelopment project, the Executive Director expressed interest in acknowledging neighbourhood history at the grand re-opening of the building. As an aspiring place-based educator, I saw that Kits House had an opportunity to acknowledge local histories in a new decolonizing way. I took this opportunity to explore members’ ideas on history and to open up a dialogue around colonization, decolonization and reconciliation at Kits House. My research findings shed light on how to facilitate historical dialogues among Indigenous, immigrant and settler communities, not only at Kits House, but also across the Westside of Vancouver.

Kits House staff, board and members have also expressed an interest in strengthening relations with Musqueam community members. The Musqueam Reserve is within the service area of Kits House and yet to date there has been a small number of interactions between the Musqueam Nation and Kits House (Catherine Leach, January 19, 2012, personal communications). My research provides insight into how to prepare non-Indigenous Kits House members to participate in respectful dialogue with Musqueam community members and identifies how learning local Indigenous history may contribute to opening this dialogue. My research considers Kits House’s role in larger reconciliation processes. With the Truth and Reconciliation Commission coming to Vancouver in September 2013, this may be another opportunity for Kits House to participate in dialogues between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members.

Although my research is situated in a local, place-based education context (i.e. Kits House), it occurs in a specific context provincially, federally and internationally. Whether it is the Province of BC’s New Relationship initiative, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, or the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, some form of new relationship with Indigenous peoples is being sought at multiple political levels. Some of these policies are current day re-iterations of long-standing colonial state relations with Indigenous peoples. As I write this thesis, Indigenous-led visions of decolonization are taking shape in the Idle No More Movement.
I hope that my research will identify ways to engage visitor-settlers to participate in their own decolonization and to help them find ways to support Indigenous-led efforts, such as Idle No More, to change political relationships among the state, visitor-settlers and Indigenous peoples.

**Additional background on my research**

In addition to sharing my personal background in the opening narrative, I would also like to outline the epistemology, axiology and ontology that shaped my research. I have chosen to approach research from a critical feminist paradigm. As a critical feminist researcher I seek to critique and transform historical and structural oppressions (Glesne, 2011). Having valued radical social change prior to beginning research, I am immediately drawn to the role of activist researcher / scholar / intellectual, which is often associated with critical and feminist researchers (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Glesne, 2011). Likewise, I am attracted to critical theory and its focus on studying what could be (Thomas, 1993) and its goals of social transformation and emancipation (Glesne, 2011).

As a critical feminist researcher I see reality emerging from historical conditions and forces and as Guba & Lincoln (2005) outline, this “virtual reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values, crystallized over time” (p. 195). I approach my research questioning what has shaped the current reality that I perceive rather than seeking an objective, universal reality.

My epistemology is shaped from a combination of critical theory and feminist theory. From a critical perspective, I consider knowledge to be subjective and I understand my research findings are influenced by my values as a researcher and existing power relations (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). I also seek knowledge that is marginalized and I identify how certain epistemologies are dominant and influential in society (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). From a feminist perspective, I consider epistemology to include feelings, values and the experiences of women in the production of knowledge (Hesse-Biber, 2007).

As a critical feminist, I approach my research highly cognizant of my biases as a White, middle class woman. Since I value looking at my identity and the ways in which oppression and power shape my own and others’ experiences of the world, critical feminism’s focus on reflexive research immediately appeals to me. I am committed to self-reflexive practice, to identify my own experiences, feelings and values, and to analyze how these influences construct knowledge in my research.
My thesis at a glance

This first chapter has introduced my relationship to educational research, outlined my research questions and study site, and highlighted the significance of my research to decolonizing place-based education. My thesis continues in Chapter 2 with an outline of my theoretical framework and a review of relevant literature in the fields of place-based education, decolonizing pedagogies and pedagogies for the privileged. Next, in Chapter 3, my methodology is outlined as a critical action research project. I detail the pedagogies I used in three place-based workshops and the use of interviews to follow up on participants’ learning experiences. I explain the constant comparative method I used to analyze divergent and common themes in the data.

My Findings and Discussion, Chapters 4 and 5, answer the three research questions based on observations from the workshops, and responses from seven participant interviews. In Chapter 6, I go on to discuss the implications of my findings for Kits House staff / members, educators involved in reconciliation processes, and place-based educators. I highlight how I would shape my future decolonizing place-based pedagogies in additional workshops with non-Indigenous learners. I also identify the need for further research to refine these emerging decolonizing pedagogies. I end my thesis with a summary of final reflections on my research.
Chapter 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Introduction
In chapter two I summarize my theoretical framework, and the findings in the literature that have shaped my study of decolonizing place-based pedagogies. Specifically this chapter highlights relevant literature in the areas of place-based education, decolonizing and indigenizing pedagogies, and pedagogies designed for learners from a diversity of visitor-settler backgrounds. In the following pages I outline the constellation of authors who have helped me define this newly emerging terrain of decolonizing place-based education.

Place-based education
As I shared in my opening narrative, I have participated in place-based learning from an early age, but it wasn’t until I read Smith and Sobel (2010) that I began to understand my experiences as a form of place-based education. Smith and Sobel (2010) quote Sobel’s (2004) definition of place-based education as:

the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts… across the curriculum. Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement, helps students develop stronger ties to the community, enhances students’ appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to service as active, contributing citizens (p.7).

As an educator, I am drawn to this call to engage students in local, experiential, community-based learning activities. In addition to Sobel’s (2004) earlier definition of place-based education, Smith and Sobel added community-based education to this pedagogy. They argue that the combination of place and community allows them to focus equally on people and the natural environment. In their place- and community-based education, they outline connections to other educational traditions including, to name a few, Dewey’s educational philosophy, service learning, and environmental education. Although Smith and Sobel talk predominately about place and community-based education in the formal school context, they do briefly reference adult place-based learning when they explain, “[p]lace- and community-based educators see learning about the local as a starting rather than ending point, but a starting point that remains
significant throughout a child’s—or an adult’s—educational experiences” (p. 25). On the surface the merits of place-based education immediately appealed to me, but I knew doing this kind of learning was a little more complex in practice.

Reading Gruenewald (2003) helped me articulate a more politicized understanding of place-based education. He explains that place-based education often overlooks power relations in local communities, and proposes a critical place-based pedagogy, which combines local, experiential, ecological learning with a critical exploration of the politics shaping ‘places’ (Gruenewald, 2003). Specifically he calls for a pairing of two goals—reinhabitation with decolonization—in his critical place-based pedagogy. He says, “If reinhabitation involves learning to live well socially and ecologically in places that have been disrupted and injured, decolonization involves learning to recognize disruption and injury and to address their causes” (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 9). In recent years, writing as Greenwood, he calls upon place-based and rural educators to learn from Indigenous communities, specifically Native survivance (Greenwood 2009). To counter the colonizing nature of schooling, he calls for learning about the history of Native survivance and the need for healing the “soul-wounding” (p. 3) of colonization both in Indigenous and White peoples. He asks his readers to reflect on what White people have lost as a result of colonization, not equating this loss with the loss experienced by Indigenous peoples, but acknowledging that different types of soul-wounding have occurred in Indigenous and White communities. In doing so, he suggests place-based educators must ask, “What happened here? What needs to be remembered, restored or conserved?” (p. 3). In my research I draw upon Greenwood’s recent work to further refine decolonizing place-based pedagogies specifically aimed at asking non-Indigenous learners to explore what happened in their own neighbourhoods.

A third goal of critical place-based pedagogy, reconciliation, is proposed by Scully (2012). In place-based Aboriginal education she combines Gruenewald’s (2003) goals of reinhabitation and decolonization with reconciliation in her work with student teachers at Lakehead University. Scully defines her pedagogy as “a practice of both social and ecological justice – an opportunity for Canadian learners to be in right relations to the peoples and the lands of Canada through territorially and culturally specific teachings” (p. 149). She argues that combining Aboriginal education with place-based studies provides an unsettling of learners, but
in a familiar place where they feel they have agency. In my study at Kits House, I have adopted Scully’s three-pronged approach to decolonizing place-based pedagogies.

Again building upon Gruenewald’s (2003) critical place-based pedagogy, Somerville (2007) adds three components to his seminal pedagogy: “place learning is necessarily embodied and local; our relationship to place is communicated in stories and other representations; place learning involves a contact zone of contested place stories” (p. 149). Here Somerville is writing about a place-based pedagogy she used to engage adults in learning place literacies in the Australian Murray-Darling Basin. Somerville identifies that Indigenous and non-Indigenous stories of a place can involve a contested understanding of a specific locality. She says, “[c]hanging our relationship to places means changing the stories we tell about places” (p.154).

My research delves into this contested contact zone in a different context—that is, in an urban Canadian neighbourhood. I specifically invited participants to learn about the multiple stories related to their place of residence. In doing so, I was aiming to engage them in a decolonizing learning journey, one similar to Somerville’s new place literacy. For her, place literacy emerges from critical place-based pedagogy, one that is, “underpinned by a new epistemology and ontology, a new way of understanding what it means to be (in), and to know our places” (p.162). In other words both Somerville and I have used storytelling to facilitate learners’ reinhabitation of places.

Although most of the previously cited theorists talk predominately about place-based pedagogies within the formal education context, I am drawing upon their ideas to study non-formal and informal place-based learning among adults. Clover’s (2003) understanding of Environmental Adult Education (EAE) provides a link between place-based education and Adult Education when she defines EAE as a participatory, place-based approach that allows people to connect their social, economic, cultural and political experiences to environmental challenges. In her introduction to her 2004 book, Global Perspectives in Environmental Adult Education, Clover delves directly into the connections between culture and place. Here she explains that “[f]or many the land is culture and culture is embedded in the land” (p. xv). Given the deep connections between place and culture, she argues that place can be a site of learning about the positive and negative realities of a locality. Her call to learn about racism, poverty and inequality in place-specific learning echoes Gruenewald’s (2003) call for critical place-based studies. Clover (2004) summarizes her thoughts by stating: “‘Learning in and about place’ is about the
knowledge of place and its network of meanings, of where and who we are: it is about resistance, regeneration, inspiration, beauty, and sensuality” (p. xvi). Her pairing of resistance and regeneration with place-based learning, informs my search for decolonizing place-based pedagogies that facilitate adults to resist colonization and to regenerate community relationships through decolonization. Although Environmental Adult Education has much to offer my study, I have chosen to adopt the term place-based education in my research because I would like to explicitly dialogue with other place-based theorists about decolonizing our pedagogies.

Decolonizing and indigenizing pedagogies
I draw upon Grande’s (2004) work to analyze the tensions between Indigenous philosophies and critical pedagogies, including critical place-based pedagogy. Grande (2004) eloquently identifies how Indigenous pedagogy, what she calls Red Pedagogy, can be informed from multiple sources, including critical pedagogy. However she explains that critical pedagogy is founded upon Western philosophy, whereas Red Pedagogy needs to be “historically grounded in local and tribal narratives, intellectually informed by ancestral ways of knowing, politically centered in issues of sovereignty, and morally inspired by the deep connections among the Earth, its beings and the spirit world” (p. 35). Despite the Western epistemology underlying critical theory, she calls for solidarity among critical and Indigenous theorists “engaged in anti-imperialist and anticapitalist struggles (i.e. decolonization)” (p. 6). She explains that Red Pedagogy can employ critical pedagogy as a useful mode of inquiry to illuminate power relations among Indigenous peoples and colonization. For her, discussions among critical theorists and Indigenous theorists may be fruitful if critical theorists question their Western epistemological assumptions and Indigenous theorists use some of the analytical insights of critical theory. Similar to Grande’s approach, my study adopts both an indigenizing (drawing on Indigenous epistemologies) and a decolonizing approach (partially informed by critical theory) to identify how visitor-settlers can learn to decolonize through place-based learning.

Another important reason I draw upon Red Pedagogy is Grande’s reminder that Indigenous sovereignty, a nation-people, and self-determined and self-directed communities are central goals of this decolonizing, Red Pedagogy. In fact in Chapter 3, Grande responds to earlier work by Gregory Smith and others in the environmental movement to address the tensions between Indigenous and Western environmental philosophies. She aims to, “reframe the discourse on Indians and the environment, regrounding it in issues of tribal sovereignty and self-
determination while reengaging a thorough examination of the ongoing affects of colonization” (p.65). Although some place-based theorists articulate decolonizing as a goal in their pedagogies, Grande provides an example of explicitly centering decolonizing pedagogy on Indigenous sovereignty. In other words, place-based educators will need to go beyond critical pedagogy to fully participate in solidarity with Indigenous communities to decolonize and to support Indigenous sovereignty.

My approach to decolonizing place-based learning is also shaped by Mercier’s (2011) understanding of the ‘glocal’, a concept Escobar (2001) connected to place-based studies. Mercier eloquently describes glocalising as, “synthesi[sing] the global (in all of its diversity of contexts) from a specific local perspective, primary for the purpose of the local, not global understanding....glocalisation then, may be an approach that, knows its limits and lays no claims to universalities, or ‘globalism’, respects local variations and counter-narratives, and allows for unique interpretations for each student and classroom” (p. 300-301). In other words, I adopt a glocal lens to learn with my neighbours about colonization, a global political system, and to practice decolonization in the Westside of Vancouver, a specific local context. As Mercier argues, glocalising is especially relevant for place-specific Indigenous knowledge. I will investigate how place provides a pedagogical tool for both learning to decolonize locally, but within global systems of colonization, imperialism, patriarchy and white supremacy.

**Education, learning and decolonization**

A tension I acknowledge in my research is that I propose to use place-based *education* to decolonize people’s relationships with places. Esteva (2010), Vasquez (1998) and Zibechi (2010) remind me of Western education’s role in the colonization of Indigenous peoples across the Americas—that schools have been used to westernize Indigenous peoples in an attempt to destroy Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Closer to my research context, Michael Marker (2006) reminds me of the ongoing racism and colonization experienced by Coast Salish, specifically Makah children, in the mainstream education system. He underscores the tension between Western and Indigenous epistemologies in relation to a Makah whale hunt, and highlights the centrality of place within Indigenous learning. These authors remind me of the tensions I face while pursuing decolonizing through place-based *education*.

Several of these authors explain how in different Indigenous communities, there is no direct equivalent to the Western notions of ‘teacher’ or ‘education’. For example, in Andean
culture, a peasant does not teach you how to nurture your chacra\(^1\), but s/he will show you how s/he nurtures her own chacra (Vasquez, 1998). This approach respects the diversity of life, which is central to Andean culture; knowledge is not universalized, as it is in Western education (Vasquez, 1998). Zibechi (2010) highlights other examples where the Western concept of ‘teacher’ is absent in Indigenous education programs. One example is the use of coordinators, rather than teachers, in the Landless Workers Movement (MST) schools: “the teacher stops being “Mr. Pedagogy” and is replaced by a collective environment, one that educates everyone...” (p. 323). These authors remind me that to participate in decolonizing place-based education, educators need to decolonize their notions of ‘education’ and re-focus on learning. In my research I see myself participating as a co-learner with the other participants. In doing so I am not ignoring the power differences between academic researchers and community members, but I am admitting that I cannot teach others decolonizing place-based education. Instead I learn with my neighbours how to decolonize and nurture the places we collectively inhabit.

**Pedagogy for the privileged**

At this point, I’d like to reiterate that my research examines place-based pedagogies that help visitor-settlers learn about their relationship to (de)-colonization. I have learned a lot from the Indigenous authors cited previously who have written about decolonizing pedagogies for Indigenous students. However, in my study I am looking for forms of “pedagogy for the privileged” (Curry-Stevens, 2007, p.38). In the case of my study, participants were from predominately non-Indigenous backgrounds, giving them a privileged position in their relationship to colonization. Curry-Stevens argues specific and different pedagogies are needed when working with those coming from privileged backgrounds. Building upon her pedagogy, I turn again to the literature to find unique ways to facilitate learning about colonization specifically among visitor-settlers.

Digging into the literature I found a small number of studies related to decolonizing education for visitor-settlers. One such article is Cannon’s (2011) recommendations for decolonizing university Indigenous education programs. Although he speaks to a university context, I find one of his suggestions particularly relevant to non-formal place-based education. Cannon mentions using “decolonizing autobiographies” (p. 135), a term borrowed from Haig-

---

\(^1\) “The *chacra* is the piece of land where the peasant lovingly and respectfully nurtures plants, soil, water, microclimates and animals. In a broad sense *chacra* is all that is nurtured...” (Rivera, 1998, p. 56).
Brown (2009), to help non-Indigenous and Indigenous students learn about their relationships with the local land and Indigenous peoples. In decolonizing autobiographies, Haig-Brown (2009) asks her students to reflect on their relationships to local Indigenous peoples through learning about their own immigration stories. Both Haig-Brown and Cannon have found decolonizing autobiographies to deepen their students’ understanding of their relationship to colonization and local Indigenous Nations. Cannon also considers these decolonizing autobiographies to draw upon Indigenous ways of knowing that emphasize acknowledging relationships and places of origin. Although the workshops in my study did not include an explicit decolonizing autobiography exercise, several of the workshop activities and my interview questions asked participants to reflect on their ancestral stories and their relationship to Indigenous local territories.

Another example of an author inviting visitor-settlers to engage in decolonization is Paulette Ragan. Regan’s (2010) book explores how non-Indigenous Canadians learn about their relationship to colonial history in ways that lead them to engage in reconciliation and decolonization. My resolve to work with visitor-settlers in decolonizing, historical place-based workshops was strengthened by reading Regan’s accounts of her educational work with non-Indigenous Canadians and her choice to explicitly study visitor-settlers. Specifically, I adopted Regan (2010) and Moosa-Mitha’s (2005) recommendation of becoming a learner rather than an expert in “anti-oppressive experientially based research” (Regan, 2010, p. 26). In this sense I see myself as a learning participant in the action research group, which is reflected in the workshop facilitation practices I used (see Chapter 3 for details). My choice to work with Kits House on historical commemoration aligns with Regan (2010) when she says, “…unofficial commemorative community-based initiatives that circumvent bureaucracies provide the necessary space and place for giving voice to multiple versions of the past, speaking hard truths, expressing contradictory emotions, healing the wounds of the past, and engendering hope” (p. 82). Although Regan is not explicitly speaking to place-based education, she does engage in the types of dialogues I seek to spark through decolonizing place-based pedagogies.

While Haig-Brown (2009) and Regan (2010) speak from Western European backgrounds, other visitor-settlers write from racialized backgrounds and identify as displaced Indigenous peoples. As I worked with visitor-settlers from a variety of backgrounds, the writings of Adefarakan (2011) in Indigenous Philosophies and Critical Education, speak to the need to
carefully consider the relationships between indigeneity and forced migration. Adefarakan (2011) speaks of acknowledging her, “migrant Indigeneity” (p. 40) as a Yoruba (African Indigenous) Canadian, while simultaneously acknowledging that she lives on another Indigenous peoples’ land. She calls for displaced Indigenous migrants to claim their indigeneity while simultaneously acknowledging their relationship to Western colonialism. As an educator, I consider a visitor-settler’s relationship to indigeneity and forced migration as important to acknowledge.

Discussions between racialized / displaced Indigenous visitor-settlers and Indigenous communities have occurred beyond academia. My approach to decolonizing place-based education is also informed by what has been learned through community alliances between organizations such as No One is Illegal and Indigenous grassroots organizations. No One is Illegal, “is a grassroots anti-colonial migrant justice group with leadership from members of migrant and/or racialized backgrounds... [they] combat racial profiling, detention and deportation, the national security apparatus, law enforcement brutality, and exploitative working conditions of migrants” (No One is Illegal, 2012). Their website contains a section on the work they do to, “build alliances in solidarity with Indigenous communities in struggle [to]…fight against racism, colonization, and global systems of apartheid” (No One is Illegal, 2012). A second community-based initiative, occurred in a series of dialogues hosted by the City of Vancouver between “First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Immigrant Communities” (City of Vancouver, 2012). Again I drew upon the City’s website resources to inform my approach to engaging racialized visitor-settlers in decolonizing dialogues. Both academic authors and community initiatives remind me of the complexities among the many visitor-settlers in Vancouver and the need to adopt different decolonizing place-based pedagogies within a group of diverse visitor-settler learners.

Finally I turn to Andrea Smith’s (2005) understanding of colonization, as intersecting with racism and white supremacy, patriarchy, classism and all other types of oppression, to inform my decolonizing place-based pedagogies. I have chosen place-based education for its potential to holistically facilitate learning about colonization within the context of other systems of oppression, as I understand places to be complex sites of intersecting forms of power. Place-based education offers unique opportunities for visitor-settlers to engage in forms of ‘pedagogy for the privileged’ (Curry-Stevens, 2007) that focus on learning to decolonize our relationships to
specific places and peoples. I see potential for visitor-settlers to act as allies in specific Indigenous struggles for land and sovereignty, specifically through in-depth anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-capitalist place-based learning.

**Summary**

The literature reviewed in this chapter presents empirical findings and theories in the emerging field of decolonizing place-based education. Writings from place-based educators have predominately focused on learning among children in the formal school system. My study expands decolonizing place-based research to examine the potential of this pedagogy for adults in informal and non-formal learning environments. One of the key components of this study builds upon previous research in the area of ‘pedagogy for the privileged’ (Curry-Stevens, 2007). As noted among several cited authors, pedagogies that engage privileged learners are unique and need to be shaped to unsettle (Regan, 2010) the specific colonial mentalities present among many visitor-settlers. My study aims to bridge the gap between decolonizing place-based studies and other studies that have also engaged visitor-settlers in forms of decolonizing learning. By drawing upon literature from a diversity of educational contexts, I have designed a set of new decolonizing place-based pedagogies to study. The next chapter outlines the research methodology I used to study these pedagogies.
Chapter 3. Methodology

Introduction
This chapter includes an overview of my research methodology, methods and data analysis. I begin by outlining the critical action research methodology used to investigate my research questions. I pair this with an in-depth explanation of the research methods—document analysis, participant observations, and interviews—that I used to study decolonizing place-based pedagogies. A detailed description of the pedagogies I employed in three workshops are included, as these pedagogical choices are central to my research. The chapter ends with an overview of data analysis, which prepares the reader for the following chapter on my research findings.

Methodology
I investigated my research questions at Kits House through a critical action research project. Although action research is typically associated with studies done in the formal education system, I have adapted the methodology outlined in Kemmis and McTaggart’s (1988) seminal handbook to an informal adult education context. Many of their seventeen characteristics of action research (p.22-24) align with my research methodology, especially the participatory and collaborative nature of action research, its focus on improving educational practices, as well as its inclusion of “self-critical communities of people” (p.23) researching and learning together.

Throughout my research, I acted as a participant observer and engaged community members and myself in the “plan, act & observe, reflect spiral” of action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2000, p. 596). As a critical action researcher I brought research questions informed by critical theory to the community (Mills, 2003), but refined these research questions in dialogue with community members. The research project included four elements:

1) forming an action research team with community members;
2) documenting local Indigenous, immigrant and settler histories through document analysis;
3) facilitating and observing decolonizing place-based learning processes in three workshops; and
4) interviewing community members to further reflect on their learning process.

Through documenting the workshops, I sought to understand how community members learned from decolonizing place-based pedagogies. I also recorded their ideas during the workshops for
representing local histories in the new Kits House building. In the follow up interviews, I dug deeper into participants’ understandings of neighbourhood history, colonization, decolonization and reconciliation.

During the study I worked with active and collaborative research participants. Although some action research involves co-researchers, the participants in the project were not directly involved in defining the original research questions, and hence, I use the term research participant to indicate that the research was heavily shaped by me. However, participants did select their individual historical research projects, helped me to refine my research questions and provided their analysis on my initial research findings.

My choice to focus on understanding colonization through historical research of a particular place is shaped by the 25 Indigenous projects described in Linda Tuhitiwai Smith’s (1999) decolonizing methodology. Although Smith focuses on research projects led by Indigenous researchers, I find her suggestions have relevancy for decolonizing methodologies adopted by visitor-settler researchers. Meza-Wilson’s (2012) thesis has informed my adoption of Smith’s methodologies here. Specifically, I shape my research around her ideas of claiming, remembering, reading, writing and sharing with the intention that this type of research will contribute to reframing social problems and returning of the lands on the Westside of Vancouver. By re-reading and re-writing the history of Kits House communities to consider how colonization has shaped the Westside, I see a possibility for Indigenous communities to re-claim their relationships to specific lands. I consider this place-based history project to be a part of a remembering process, which like Smith (1999), I see as a healing process of painful histories. As well, Smith’s call, for Indigenous researchers to share their ‘findings’ in accessible ways, parallels my project’s aim to share re-written Kits House histories with community members.

The two long-term projects of reframing and returning could be initiated through the dialogues my historical place-based research project initiated in the community. However, dialogues at Kits House need to continue beyond my research for community members to reframe their understandings of relationships and to support Indigenous struggles to return to lands, including the Westside of Vancouver.

**Methods**

Research data was collected through participant observations (in three workshops), documents (photos, drawings, and collage), and through follow up interviews with research
participants. The workshops were video recorded and partially transcribed to document and analyze the participant observations. Two to six weeks after the third workshop, I interviewed the seven participants for in-depth feedback on their learning experiences. In semi-structured interviews (see Appendix A for protocol), where I identified questions ahead of the interview, but added new questions in response to exchanges in the interviews (Glesne, 2011), I asked members to describe their experiences participating in the project and how they had learned about (de)-colonization. Interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed. At a fourth and final meeting, participants were audio recorded while they discussed initial research findings.

Throughout the research process I kept a reflexive journal. This allowed me to reflect on my participant observations, document analysis, my position as a researcher and on my dual role as educator – researcher. I used my research journal as a reflexive practice, which I borrowed both from feminist research methodology (Glesne, 2011; Pillow, 2003) and action research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988).

**Background on participants**

Seven research participants were recruited based on their interest in and knowledge of local history, their involvement in Kits House programs and their ability to participate between June and December 2012. I contacted potential participants through emailing the Kits House listserv, distributing posters, informing staff and presenting at three Kits House events. All seven participants who volunteered to participate in the study are women, with a range of ages from early adulthood to seniors. All the participants have either volunteered with Kits House or attended at least one program at the neighbourhood house. Five participants are present or past residents of Kitsilano (six to forty years), and two are residents of other Westside neighbourhoods. Participants grew up in different locations including: Lower Mainland (3), Washington State (1), Nova Scotia (1), China (1) and Ireland (1). Five participants identified with Western European ancestry (English, Irish, Scottish, German, Dutch, Italian), one with Metis ancestry, and one with Chinese ancestry. Below is a detailed table, which provides more background on each participant:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Background information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claire</td>
<td>Claire grew up in Seattle and moved to Vancouver in her early adulthood. She has lived in Kitsilano for almost 30 years. Claire talked about her Irish and Dutch ancestry in the interview. She attended three workshops and the analysis meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Mary grew up in East Vancouver and moved to the Westside as an adult, a couple of years ago. She talked about her Italian and German ancestry. She attended three workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>Anne grew up in West Vancouver, has lived in several Vancouver neighbourhoods and moved to Kitsilano about seventeen years ago. Anne talked about her Canadian, Dutch, and Cree ancestry and referred to other distance connections to English and Scottish ancestry. She attended three workshops and the analysis meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie</td>
<td>Natalie grew up on the Westside and has also lived on the North Shore and overseas. She moved back to the Westside, to Kitsilano, six or seven years ago. Natalie described her English, Irish and Scottish ancestry. She attended workshops 1 and 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Sarah grew up in Nova Scotia and travelled and worked extensively across Canada throughout her adulthood. She has lived in Kitsilano for over 30 years. Sarah talked about her German and English ancestry. She attended workshops 2 and 3 as well as the analysis meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>Jane grew up in China and emigrated four years ago to attend university in Vancouver. She has lived on the Westside since moving here. Jane talked about her Chinese ancestry. She attended workshops 2 and 3 as well as the analysis meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erin</td>
<td>Erin emigrated from Ireland as a young adult. She lived in Kitsilano for forty years, before recently moving to East Vancouver. Erin talked about her Irish ancestry. She attended workshop 3 and the analysis meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Background on study participants

Description of workshops

I undertook this study searching for decolonizing place-based pedagogies. The pedagogies I adopted in my workshops were a response to both place-based pedagogies and anti-racism / anti-oppression pedagogies that I had previously encountered as a learner. On the one hand I had felt place-based pedagogies often ignored colonization and relations of power that existed in places and on the other hand I had felt paralyzed by the direct challenge to my privilege experienced in anti-racism / anti-oppression trainings. I sought pedagogies that would both engage privileged learners and challenge learners, myself included, to understand colonization and engage in decolonization. I knew I was treading on challenging terrain what with being a privileged learner / facilitator myself.
In preparing the pedagogies for the workshops, I aimed to strike a balance between finding ways to draw in a greater range of people to decolonizing education workshops and to challenge people to learn about colonization and their personal relationship to colonization. As such, I decided to use a focus on neighbourhood history as a way to engage people. Originally I had planned to engage learners in a decolonizing autobiography exercise and to ask the learners to reflect on their ancestry and their relationships to local Indigenous peoples. Through discussions with Kits House staff, I decided to shift the workshop exercises to include learning about any forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler histories in the neighbourhood. In the following section I outline the specific workshop curriculum and activities I used in my place-based pedagogies.

At the first workshop, drawing loosely on photo elicitation methods (Harper, 2002), I invited participants to bring photos or objects related to forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler Westside histories and to share what they knew about local histories as well as what they would like to learn. As a co-participant I brought photos related to Snauq (pronounced “sun’ahk”) and the Kitsilano Indian Reserve, which is now referred to as Vanier Park. I talked about Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh’s connections to the seasonal harvesting grounds of Snauq and how this area was declared an Indian Reserve by the Canadian government in the late 1800’s. I explained how later, Squamish community members, who were living on the Reserve, were forced to relocate as part of larger colonization efforts in Vancouver. I also brought photos of čəsnaʔəm (pronounced “tsusnahm” or “cusnaum” and known in English as Marpole Midden) to explain the 2012 Musqueam protests at this ancient village site. In addition to the photos, I used a set of resource books (see Appendix B) to spark discussion. One of the books used throughout the three workshops was Bruce Macdonald’s (1992) Vancouver: A visual history. This book included a set of maps (from pre-1880’s to 1980’s) of the Vancouver area, beginning with a map of Indigenous villages, harvesting grounds and place names. This book was helpful for visualizing the decade-by-decade displacement of Indigenous communities in Kitsilano. After everyone shared their historical stories, we went on to discuss the scope of the research project, including research questions, goals and our choice of historical research topics. I explained that Kits House was interested in hearing the group’s ideas for acknowledging history in the new neighbourhood house. For more details on the workshop curriculum see Figures 1-3.
Workshop 1  
*July 13, 3-5pm, Kits House*

*Agenda*
- Welcomes
- Consent Forms
- Ground Rules
- Sharing Stories
- Research Goals
- Next Steps

*Guiding questions posed by facilitator*
- Who and what was here before us? How does this history shape our current relationships to our neighbours and neighbourhood? How do we reconcile history that continues to impact us today?

---

Figure 1: Workshop 1 agenda

---

Workshop 2  
*August 16, 5:30-8:30pm, Kits House*

*Agenda*
- Welcomes
- Review guidelines and consent forms for new people
- Mapping our learned histories
- Sharing what we learned
- Discussion about local histories
- Next Steps

*Guiding questions posed by facilitator*
- What significance does the land and history you’re talking about have to Aboriginal, immigrant and settler communities? Do multiple groups have connections to the history you’re talking about? Are there any connections between the histories we’ve shared?

- When you hear the word ‘colonization’ what images, thoughts or feelings come to you about Vancouver or Canadian history?

- How could we open up dialogues about difficult histories in our neighbourhood? How could we talk about our neighbourhood histories in ways that honour multiple perspectives? How could we reconcile these histories?

---

Figure 2: Workshop 2 agenda
Between the first and second workshop, participants researched a specific historical topic related to Westside history through a variety of means (e.g. Vancouver Archives, library, or attending local tours). As a co-participant, I continued to learn about the history of Snaq through reviewing photos at the Vancouver Archives and reading articles by Maracle (2004), and Barman (2007). I prepared a more detailed presentation, along with a series of photos, to illustrate the shifts in land access for Indigenous communities from the late 1800’s to the mid-1900’s.

At the second workshop I invited participants to draw a visual representation of their history topic. This approach drew upon arts-based research methods (Leavy, 2009), which encouraged participants to visually share their historical stories with the group. Again as a co-participant I shared new information about Snaq, the Kitsilano Indian Reserve and the
formation of Vanier Park. In the second half of the workshop, I facilitated a dialogue on the questions outlined in Figure 2. I concluded this workshop by inviting participants to bring photos for a public collage that we would create at the third workshop.

At the third workshop, I showed three excerpt vignettes from the 125 Vancouver video, which was produced by the City of Vancouver to commemorate its 125th anniversary. The video excerpts included stories about: a) unceded Musqueam territory in the Endowment Lands, near UBC; b) two visitor-settlers’ connection to Locarno Beach; and c) a Chinese-Canadian family grocery store in Dunbar. I showed this video as an example of a collage of stories from multiple perspectives and asked a series of questions to guide the collage making (see Figure 3). Next participants shared additional information that they had learned about their topic and then worked collaboratively on a three-panel poster board collage (p.52). After the collage completion, participants discussed ideas for acknowledging histories in their new neighbourhood house. This discussion returned the group to the action-planning phase of the research project. At the end of the workshop I posed some closing discussion questions (see Figure 3). Finally, I explained the next steps in the research project, including participation in individual interviews and a final meeting to discuss emerging research findings.

Data analysis

The constant comparative method (Merriam, 1998) was used throughout the data analysis process. Similar and divergent themes were identified and compared in the collected data immediately after each workshop and interview, and then again after coding the data systematically. Online qualitative analysis software was used to help code the interview transcriptions and the partial workshop transcripts. Coding the interviews and workshop transcripts begun with open coding and then proceeded to focused coding, which were later grouped into themes (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011; Creswell, 2007). Photos, drawings and the collage were collected as documents; however, due to time constraints, little systematic analysis was completed with this data.

After I had completed an initial analysis of the workshops and interviews, I held a follow up meeting on December 7, 2012 with the participants as part of my collaborative action research methodology. Five of the seven participants attended this meeting and provided their feedback on my initial research findings. The absent participants were invited to provide written or verbal feedback to me. I used the meeting to do member checks (Creswell, 2007), to see whether
members felt that I had understood what they had said in the workshops and interviews. As well, I invited members to provide additional or divergent analysis of the workshops and to a lesser extent, the interviews. In the meeting I presented the finalized research questions and summarized my answers to each question, using a small selection of quotes from the workshops and interviews. Then I invited discussion on each question and asked whether I had misunderstood anything or missed any key points. I audio-recorded this meeting and partially transcribed it. I identified key quotes and ideas that arose during the meeting and compared this to my own analysis.

**Strengths and limitations of the methodology**

Adopting an action research methodology led to particular strengths and limitations in my study. As a qualitative researcher the insights identified in my study of decolonizing place-based pedagogies cannot be generalized to other teaching or learning environments. Although generalizations are limited, the qualitative study did provide an in-depth understanding of a particular decolonizing place-based pedagogies with seven learners.

Acting simultaneously as a researcher and facilitator in the action research proved to be challenging at times. This dual role sometimes stole time from the two spheres that I juggled—research and facilitation. One of the things I regret is having less time to refine the discussion questions for the workshops. At the time, I was unaware that I had left the invitation question wide open for participants to research any type of local history. Recalling my original proposed pedagogy I was planning to use Haig-Brown’s (2009) decolonizing autobiographical approach, where I would have asked participants to specifically learn about their personal ancestry and their relationship to Indigenous Nations and colonization locally. However, during the rush of launching my research and workshop planning, my pedagogical planning was limited, which resulted in a more general question being posed to the study group.

Drawing upon arts-based research methods engaged the participants more deeply in data creation. The photo elicitation, drawing and collage all provided visual data that enriched the learning that both, I did as a researcher, and the participants did. As well, these three activities encouraged participants to share their stories in a combination of verbal and visual mediums. In other words, the degree to which participants created data and learned from sharing data was enhanced by the arts-based research methods adopted in the study.
The extended timeline of action research provided greater opportunity to get to know the participants and to understand their perspectives. The series of three workshops, followed by interviews meant that my interactions in the interviews were with people I already knew. Given that I had a relationship with the participants, the discussions in the interviews were more open, providing richer data, and also included participants asking me questions about my own background and understanding of (de)-colonization.

**Summary**

In summary, this chapter presents my use of a critical action research methodology. Arising from my methodological choices, I described the key data collection methods I used to answer my research questions: participant observations, interviews and document analysis. I provided a detailed description of the decolonizing place-based pedagogies I used in three workshops. Finally I outlined the constant comparative data analysis (Merriam, 1998) method I used in addition to open and focused coding, to identify key themes emerging in the data. I now turn to my research findings in the next chapter to answer my research questions.
Chapter 4. Research Findings

Introduction

The following chapter includes my research findings and answers my overarching research question: how can decolonizing place-based pedagogies encourage visitor-settlers to learn about colonization, engage in forms of decolonization and become supportive allies in Indigenous struggles for sovereignty? I answer this question through providing my research findings to my three sub-research questions. First I review what I call the baseline—that is the participants’ understandings of history, (de)-colonization and reconciliation. Second I summarize what participants learned during the study group, and third, I share participants’ ideas for representing histories at Kits House. The chapter is structured in such a way that I present findings, using substantial quotes from participants, to answer the research questions. I present most of the quotes with minimal analysis. Instead I have chosen to present more quotes to allow the reader to make his or her analysis of the learners’ understandings and experiences. As well, I adopted this writing style to avoid the trap identified by Riggs and Augoustinos (2005) of separating myself, a non-Indigenous researcher, from my predominately non-Indigenous participants. I agree with Riggs and Augoustinos (2005) that it is dangerous to create a dichotomy that would identify ‘good anti-racists’ (i.e. me) from ‘bad racists’ (p. 464) (i.e. participants) since all non-Indigenous peoples, including me, continue to benefit from colonization. To further counter this potential dynamic, I have included excerpts from my research journal to expose my own learning about racism and (de)-colonization. In the following Chapter 5, I discuss the implication of my findings for decolonizing place-based pedagogies. This is where the reader will find my analysis of the participants’ reflections.

Participant understandings and perspectives

The first question I investigated centered on the participants’ understandings of (de)-colonization, history and reconciliation. This section outlines a summary of participants’ perspectives; however, many of the opinions expressed by the participants directly contradict the principles of decolonizing pedagogies.

History

Here I outline participants’ general understandings of history. Although participants chose specific history topics to research, I leave a discussion of their topics to the second section of my findings. In the workshops and interviews participants expressed a variety of opinions
ranging from a desire to preserve history, to debates about whether the past or present are better times, to gaining inspiration from history, to focusing more on the present rather than the past. The following three quotes from Mary, Anne and Natalie (see p. 22 for background on participants) provide an example of the range of opinions expressed among participants about history, and especially its connection to the present. At the third workshop, Mary participated in the discussion about the ongoing impact of history when she explained:

[The] actions and thoughts of people in the past still have an impact or may be the start of things that progress to these times. So even prejudice for example. How people were treated in the past still there’s that prejudice that existed. Their ancestors have been treated a certain way (Workshop 3).

Learners like Mary, who understand history’s impact on today’s intercultural relationships, may be more receptive to learning about the ongoing impacts of colonization in our present day communities.

Although opinions similar to Mary’s were expressed throughout workshop discussions, there were specific debates about how much to focus on history and the impact of the past. Anne suggested a different understanding of history, and promoted a focus on the present when she stated:

I don’t think white people are more important than other people I don’t think we’re more powerful or anything I think we’re just because certain things in history that have happened you know accidents of climate and a little advanced technology and not being wiped out by disease and things that we kind of had the edge for a while but I don’t think it’s a permanent state and I think that we’re kinda prolonging that illusion when we kinda blame ourselves we’re not that important we’re not that powerful but we are powerful enough to actually look at what we’re doing today to exploit people and that is where I think we have the power to change (Interview).

Anne’s opinion is a site of tension for decolonizing place-based educators who adopt a historical lens. Her desire to focus on the present needs to be acknowledge; however, the impact of history
in shaping present day exploitation may need to be explicitly addressed. As well, she expresses a view that White people had more advanced technology than Indigenous peoples, which is a common assumption, one I inadvertently found myself agreeing to, that needs to be questioned with learners.

Natalie contributed yet another perspective on history when she questioned the centrality of history at Kits House:

what role does history play? It plays a role I don’t know how central of a role because Kits House is not a museum it’s not a place that is about the past it’s really is about the future well it’s about the here and now actually I don’t see it about being the future it’s about listening to the diverse opinions from people now and trying to shape their programming and services and everything that they do based on the now. So I mean I think history is critical…but I don’t see Kits House as being the place necessarily where history has to—what I am I trying to say, I don’t think it’s a major focus that Kits House is about (Interview).

This excerpt provides an example of a participant who may not agree with a decolonizing approach that imparts responsibility for historical wrongs to present day community sites. Again this provides a challenge to those facilitating decolonizing place-based learning through historical studies.

Participants didn’t directly reference colonization in their discussions of history; however, they were interested to learn more about Aboriginal history and a couple (Anne and Erin) indicated a desire to learn about different immigrant histories (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Asian). Overall participants expressed a draw to study history from their own perspective and from a personal interest in history. As a facilitator, I regret not taking time to more fully discuss what is meant by ‘history’ and how different cultures understand the notion of history. In many ways participants’ understanding of history went unquestioned during the study group.

Reconciliation
When I asked participants directly about colonization, decolonization and reconciliation, most people were able to talk about reconciliation more easily, than colonization, and decolonization was the least understood term of the three. In fact my original research questions
omitted any reference to reconciliation. It wasn’t until after engaging with participants in the workshops that I added a reference to reconciliation in the interview protocol (Appendix A). Participants associated ‘reconciliation’ with Canada and specifically with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. This differed from colonization and decolonization, with several participants first making reference to international events outside of Canada. Reconciliation was considered difficult by some, whereas, others thought reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples was improving in Canada. In her interview, Mary made reference to the resolution of the protests at Ʉ̓ənsəʔəm / Marpole Midden as an example of successful reconciliation.

Many other themes came up in my discussions with the participants about reconciliation. In one instance the theme of self-sufficiency was discussed in relation to reconciliation. Anne said:

> Obviously they should be given the tools for self sufficiency and individual self sufficiency at this point and then if they want to join or create their own cooperatives or whatever kind of system or interdependence that they want with us feel free to do so but I think that the reality for people who are First Nations is that it’s so much more complex than just belonging to one particular band or one particular area (Interview).

Although Anne didn’t specifically reference Indigenous sovereignty, her reference to self-sufficient Indigenous communities may be a starting point for further discussions about the links between sovereignty, self-sufficiency and reconciliation.

When asked to describe her understanding of reconciliation Natalie underscored the need for action:

> I think if we can get past that, and I’m understanding that a lot of First Nations people want to get past that, to not just to sitting in the what happened, but to try and figure out how we can move forward and build from it. I think that would be a really positive step versus it just being, let’s look at history, let’s sit in this and let’s
see if we can try, and so those are my thoughts that come to mind about reconciliation (Interview).

Natalie is referring to the acknowledgement process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in this excerpt. She seems to suggest a need to go beyond acknowledging history to moving towards active forms of reconciliation. However, she didn’t elaborate on the types of actions she would like to see as part of an active reconciliation process.

A sub-discussion emerged in the workshops and interviews related to Kits House’s role in reconciliation processes. Again participants expressed a range of opinions about Kits House and reconciliation. For example, Natalie was uncertain that Kits House had a need to participate in reconciliation. I asked her how Kits House could open up dialogues to reconcile community relationships and she responded:

I’m still thinking out loud, I don’t actually know that I agree that reconciliation needs to take place, to me reconciliation the term implies that a wrong has been done and one’s trying to make amends for it, one is trying to turn that around so within the context of that question it would imply to me that Kits Neighbourhood House has done a wrong and now needs to make up for it or chooses to make up for it (Interview).

Here Natalie questions one of the underlying assumptions I made as a decolonizing place-based educator. I had assumed that Kits House could contribute to reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous relationships as part of a decolonizing process. In fact I had seen this as a long-term goal of the action research project—to spark a desire to reconcile relationships among Kits House members and Musqueam members as well as other Indigenous community members. Interestingly, later on in our conversation Natalie said, “if I were just [to] put reconciliation aside, that term, I would say that there’s a lot of work that Kits House could do to open dialogue amongst many diverse groups” (Interview). In the end Natalie didn’t relate to the word reconciliation, but still saw need for diverse groups to interact with one another.

Kits House’s role in reconciliation came up indirectly several times throughout the workshops and interviews. Erin, Anne and Natalie mentioned the lack of Indigenous community
members actively involved at Kits House. Sarah, Erin and Natalie also commented that Kits House could be more inclusive and welcoming to different groups of people although they didn’t specifically refer to Indigenous community members. Others underscored how Kits House acts a facilitator of diverse groups of people. Claire mentioned meeting people from many different backgrounds in her Osteofit class and Mary talked about her volunteer work with the Multicultural Women’s Support Group. As well, Natalie thought Kits House already acted as a facilitator among diverse community groups on the Westside. Overall participants showed interest in fostering diversity at Kits House, but didn’t necessarily talk about diversity within a reconciliation context.

Colonization

Participants’ understandings of the term, ‘colonization’, ranged from very little understanding to offering specific examples of colonization internationally, nationally and locally. For Natalie and Jane, specific international examples (India and China respectively) came to mind mostly quickly. This international association with colonization provides a challenge for those teaching about local colonization through place-based learning. However, Natalie also talked about specific concerns in Canada including the Indian Act, residential schools, and reserves. In addition, Mary provided a specific local example of colonization when she stated:

in some research of Vancouver history I came across…a picture of men standing in front of a tent and city hall written on it, that’s the word that comes to mind when I think of colonization or that’s a picture that comes to mind and yeah I don’t know why I wrote that down, I put down sadness with hope (Interview).

Here Mary describes a specific picture that includes the first City Hall (the tent) in Vancouver. I consider her example here to describe the early stages of colonization specific to Vancouver. However, her example needs to be understood in the context of my full conversation with Mary. She described colonization with some confusion and so although the picture she referenced is a specific example of settler government formation and imposition, her description of the event did not explicitly describe it as such. Put together Natalie’s and Mary’s associations with local
events demonstrate some potential for dialoguing about local colonization processes in a historical place-based study group.

When asked about colonization, Claire described that there were differences between the colonists in Canada and settlers in America. She had learned about some of the differences in colonization patterns through a presentation at the BC Museum in Victoria. Claire went on to explain that she grew up in Washington State. She talked about her family’s personal connection to colonization when she explained:

settlers began coming later but it was colonizing with the intention of not taking land to add to well not for the sake of owning land but for being there to serve at the fort whether by growing vegetables or having your family there while you’re shooting guns or whatever the Americans wanted people to keep settling further and further and further. So while they did put a fort up for the fur trade but that was rather brief and rather limited around the mouth of the Columbia River and so most of us I mean families like mine came to settle to have the land and farm it for the sake of farming and settling (Interview).

In this excerpt she identifies her family as settlers in the US context and makes a personal connection to the term colonization.

Others also talked about colonization from a personal perspective. Anne, as a Metis woman, explained:

you know I don’t think people set out to conquer the Indians I mean my ancestors married them and they didn’t just shack up, like they were like Christians, and they married them and they didn’t see them inferior at all, in fact when they first met the natives they probably looked up to them (Interview).

Anne’s perspective on colonization is clearly shaped by her own ancestry and family history. In a similarly personal narrative, Natalie explained how her perspective is influence by her Anglo-Saxon background. She stated:
I think colonization that to me in many ways, that’s exactly what it is it’s about the winners going into to take over a land, a people, a culture, a way of being and they don’t necessarily as taking over because to them, us, whatever, I come from that white Anglo Saxon background it’s all about the betterment of the people or that’s the terminology that is being used. So I see it from both sides and I can see what that white Anglo Saxon viewpoint was back then (Interview).

In both cases, Anne and Natalie empathize with their ancestors’ roles or beliefs in relation to colonization.

During the second workshop, in a discussion about history and colonization, Sarah said, “Well I blame the Queen Victoria, when Canada was first formed. I blame her, the British saying you know we took the land away from them, which they did, to form the provinces and this is what’s turned out to be because they were taken away from the land, really from what they had” (Workshop 2). Sarah’s response differs from Anne’s and Natalie’s as she blames the monarchy rather than making a personal connection to colonization.

In the same workshop discussion Anne also takes a less personal approach to historical wrongs:

It’s not to take it personally because we tend to identify with our people and I’m not, like I look white and all the rest of it. I’m actually 1/16th Cree and that’s the Hudson Bay company…but I think history is really of a people and a people is everyone who’s living in that area and it progresses and different people come and go so to identify with a certain group 50 years ago or 100 years ago or even your parents or grandparents I think it’s a mistake cause we’re not responsible for what they did…the problem is of course we’ve all grown up being taught history, at least when I went to school we were taught history from the point of view of the Empire and the Commonwealth…but actually those people are often like in my case and the case of many people, are our ancestors too. So just to see it as a history of a place and not to take it so personally that we’re identifying with those people. So there’s no point in being defensive. I mean my ancestors weren’t living here at all actually when any of this took place (Workshop 2).
The distancing of personal connections or implications in colonization expressed by Sarah and Anne again provided a challenge to me as a decolonizing place-based educator who was aiming to engage participants in dialogues about acknowledging their relationship to colonization.

Other themes arose in the discussions about colonization. Anne talked about how human nature has led to the frequent exploitation of vulnerable peoples in many different places and times. She explained:

> I think the native people in Canada were very badly treated no question. But I think that vulnerable people are badly treated regardless of their ethnic origin or whatever and I think that goes on right now. I think really the lesson from that is what are we doing now. Like right now we have slavery in Vancouver, I’m sure, I mean de facto slavery, we have what are the statistics are everybody has like about 24 slaves working for them when you buy things like that or you know these are the real issues I think what are we doing now like what are we learning from this that we can kind of change the way things are done now that to me is a lesson of history (Interview).

In this excerpt Anne addresses two themes: first, that exploitation is part of human nature and second that (as she mentioned previously) we need to focus on addressing present exploitation. The additional reference to slavery also struck me as Natalie referenced present day slavery in her interview too. I never clarified what Anne meant by her reference to 24 slaves, but I interpreted this as a reference to people working in sweatshop factories. Anne’s discussion provided a lot for me as a facilitator to reflect upon, especially how to facilitate discussions of so called ‘human nature’ into dialogues about colonization.

Claire, Anne, Natalie and Jane made connections between land access and colonization. Claire talked about settlers settling land in the USA, Anne talked about land claims, Natalie connected colonization with a group of “winners” taking over another group’s land, and Jane referenced displaced ethnic groups in China resettling in new areas.
Participants’ range of references to land and colonization could provide discussion points for talking about colonization of lands in specific places.

**Decolonization**

When asked about decolonization participants expressed more confusion or questions about this term than with the terms colonization and reconciliation. Claire and Sarah thought the term was academic and Sarah didn’t recommend using this term when talking with the general public. Claire, Mary and Anne asked me questions to find out my understanding of decolonization.

Similar to colonization, Jane and Natalie more immediately associated decolonization with the international context rather than the local context. For Jane, she talked about the decolonization of Hong Kong in detail as a concrete example. Natalie also shared international examples:

so I assume that’s the opposite of colonization which would be okay I’m trying to think what the word would be so decolonization such as what happened to India in 1947 such that’s happened to many African countries in the 40s and 50s and 60s (Interview).

Similar to Natalie, when asked about decolonization, Erin also made reference to India. These three participants’ immediate association with decolonization outside Canada did not help participants to identify decolonization processes locally.

Not everyone talked about decolonization internationally. My discussion with Anne about decolonization went into greater depth about land claims in the Canadian context. She responded:

I don’t like the idea of a separate government because they live in a country which is Canada we’re all Canadians and we’re all under the same law and they’re tried under our law and this is our country and I think they just need to be involved more and I think it should be just one government for everybody and then the land claims thing I don’t have an answer to that (Interview).
Anne left me to ponder how to discuss the concept of decolonization and tie it into notions of Indigenous sovereignty. Her concern over land claims and self-governance is a common perspective that likely needs to be directly discussed in decolonizing place-based workshops.

Although Anne questions the notion of self-governance, the themes of self-sufficiency and the need for capacity building for decolonization to be successful were mentioned in my discussions with Anne and Natalie. This theme came up repeatedly with Natalie when she talked about decolonization as a process and the need to build capacity amongst Indigenous peoples for successful self-sufficiency.

Several participants had somewhat negative associations with the term, decolonization. Natalie provided the following word association with ‘decolonization’: “so self-determination often anarchy [are] words that come to mind, the right thing to do around self-expression, self rule” (Interview). Her association of decolonization with anarchy may be somewhat negative. Although she follows this by saying it’s still the right thing to do. Sarah and Jane also expressed caution in response to my use of the term. Sarah said, “I associate with it but I think it’s a word that you have to be very careful how you use it because it could be offending too” (Interview). Sarah’s response indicates that she has some discomfort with the term decolonization. When I asked her to explain her caution, she said that she didn’t think Aboriginal people would necessarily understand the word. Given her response I thought Sarah might have also been confused about the word, but perhaps not willing to ask for clarification on the term. In a similarly cautious approach, Jane said, “decolonization (pause) I’m suspicious of all the ‘de’ words” (Interview). Likewise Mary associated the term with a “taking apart”. Based on these participant responses, I realized that further discussion about decolonization and the potential positive new relationships that could arise from decolonizing would be key in any decolonizing pedagogies.

Relationships with Aboriginal peoples

In the workshops and interviews, nearly every participant made reference to their professional or personal relationships with Indigenous people. This was a somewhat unexpected offshoot to my questions about (de)-colonization and reconciliation. Claire talked about working with Aboriginal community members at the Museum of Anthropology and in a non-profit organization, which works with Aboriginal youth. Mary talked about advising Aboriginal students in her past work at a community college. Anne explained her past work in the school
system with Aboriginal students and her volunteer work in the Downtown Eastside. Natalie referenced recently shifting her work at a credit union to include developing Aboriginal partnerships. Sarah talked about her past healthcare work in a diversity of Aboriginal communities in BC and Canada. Similarly, Erin referred to her past work with Aboriginal clients as an Occupational Therapist. Overall I was surprised that nearly all the participants had previous professional relationships with Aboriginal community members since most participants didn’t mention these relationships until I interviewed them.

Both in the workshops and interviews, people voluntarily expressed many opinions about Aboriginal peoples. These opinions are important to understand as a facilitator of decolonizing place-based pedagogies. Some of the concerning themes I encountered in these discussions included: in-fighting and corruption among Aboriginal leaders, Aboriginal community members not taking opportunities, people being stuck in victimhood, no personal implication or connections to conflicts with Aboriginal peoples and that Whites can’t ‘go back’ to their ancestral countries. Other opinions included: concerns over inequality, marginalization and segregation; others had respect for Aboriginal peoples and thought we could learn from them; others talked about the impact of residential schools; and some expressed a desire to take action and create solutions. Again I was surprised at how keen participants were to share their opinions about Aboriginal community members.

Participant learning

The second research sub-question I studied examined the learning process of the seven participants who engaged in the Learning Forgotten Histories study group. Through participant observations and interviews I answered the following question: how, and what, do Kits House members learn through their participation in historical place-based education dialogues? The subsequent section outlines the key learning done by participants about local histories, including Indigenous histories, and the role that place-based studies played in connecting people to a community.

Learning local history

One of the major learning nodes for participants included learning about specific local history topics. I had asked participants to choose a topic to learn about during the course of the study group. Six of the seven participants mentioned that they had been motivated to learn about their topic. This was one of the key motivations among participants for joining the study group.
Mary said, “…I love the fact that we became very specific, we each had a sort of a topic we all came out with something that we would really want to explore more…” (Interview).

Understanding participants’ original motivations (i.e. learning about a history topic of personal interest to them) is key to understanding how history acted as a hook for engaging participants.

I was struck by the history topics chosen by the participants. I had invited participants to learn about forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler history on the Westside of Vancouver. The following topics were researched by the participants: Arbutus Coffee Shop (Erin / Sarah), Delmont Park [reference to Japanese internment camps] (Sarah), railway development (Sarah), the Old Barn at UBC (Jane), the Brewery at Yew and 11th [including some history related to workers and owners] (Anne), Greek history (Natalie), Hippies [social change, negative connotations, confrontations] (Mary), Railway at Trafalgar Street [political and social issues, prejudice against Irish] (Claire). The majority of these topics focused on a piece of Western European settler history. As well specific people were often highlighted in the local history stories shared (e.g. John Young saving the Old Barn, Henry Reifel starting the Brewery), conflicts between Sam Greer and his neighbours about the development of the Trafalgar Railway). For the most part people were motivated to learn about their topic because they had some personal connection to the topic and in some cases people lived adjacent to the area that they researched.

Two participants (Anne and Natalie) indicated that they had selected their topic partially based on time constraints. They had been interested in other topics, but they weren’t sure that they would have been able to research the topics within the short project timeframe. For Anne this meant she didn’t follow up on researching the Aboriginal history of the land on which Kits House is being redeveloped. And for Natalie this meant she didn’t research the history of community gardens. Instead Anne focused on the Brewery history, whereas Natalie researched Greek history in Kitsilano.

Although participants focused on learning about their history topics, Claire explained how this opened up broader learning opportunities for her. Claire said, “But what I really got out of it in the long run was looking deeply into an incident and using different kinds of information sources. I got such a picture of the social and political scene at the time” (Workshop 3). Here Claire is referring to learning about the prejudice experienced by recent Irish immigrants through
her research into the development of the Trafalgar Street Railway and an Irish immigrant, Sam Greer, who opposed this development.

**Learning local Indigenous histories**

In conjunction with inviting participants to learn about local history topics, I co-participated in this process and learned about two areas on the Westside: Snaaq / Kitsilano Indian Reserve / Vanier Park and čənəʔəm / Marpole Midden. As part of my decolonizing place-based pedagogy, I shared what I had learned about Indigenous territories and connections to these two specific places with the other participants (see Chapter 3 Methodology). I was surprised that many participants knew something about Snaaq and/or čənəʔəm. Most participants didn’t express shock when I shared information about the displacement of Indigenous peoples from these two areas, which are now considered part of Vancouver. When I asked Jane what her reaction was to learning about Snaaq she said:

> like not very much emotional reaction because I kind of I just another piece of the Aboriginal histories that I’ve learned here in Canada cause before you told me I’d learned the residential schools and also like the UBC school is on Musqueam people land so I learned those signs before (Interview).

Jane indicates that she had learned about residential schools and Musqueam territory as a student at UBC and that as a result she was not as surprised when I talked about Snaaq.

In an interview with Anne she similarly expressed a lack of surprise to my discussion of the Kits Indian Reserve. First she explained that she had heard about the Kits Indian Reserve on a neighbourhood tour she attended. She continued explaining her reaction as follows:

> First of all it’s pretty self-evident and well I grew up in West Van since I was seven and there’s reserves near well you know where they are. And it’s pretty self-evident that the natives weren’t just living in those places they were living where they wanted to that someone else wasn’t living in, right, so. They had their own wars and tensions I’m sure, but you know... If you know West Van or any place on the North Shore there’s lots of nice places to live and places you would logically go to hunt or fish for salmon and hunt animals etc. are not just the reserves so it’s pretty
obvious that they were huddle to the reserves everyone knows that the specifics of that were not that shocking or new that was just was done. It’s not new. What’s weird about BC all together is just how recent it was (Interview).

Here Anne describes her previous knowledge that Indigenous peoples have been displaced from specific areas in West Vancouver and the North Shore; however, she also indicates having a reaction to how recent this displacement occurred. Both Jane’s and Anne’s responses differ from my own reaction when I was doing research. I was initially shocked by what I learned about Snaaq and čənsəʔəm.

Although there were mixed reactions to the stories I shared, they did spark dialogue and learning among participants. Natalie’s reflection captures some of the additional learning catalyzed by the workshops:

Yeah you know so I have it’s an interesting reaction I have because it almost feels like it’s not part of my history. So having said that though I went back after that workshop and in conjunction with some other stuff that happened at work and I googled the India[n] Act and I started doing some research on it to learn about what the India[n] Act was when it was put into place why it was put into place and there’s an excellent website from UBC all about the India[n] Act (Interview).

Her response indicates that she actively learned more about colonial policies in Canada as a follow up to the discussions in the workshops.

My discussion of local Indigenous displacement history sparked other discussions during the workshops. Participants asked questions about: the alphabet used to write Indigenous place names, clarification on Indigenous middens, the Squamish Band’s jurisdiction, and about chief Khahtsahlano (Kitsilano’s namesake). These questions from participants highlight that they wanted to learn more than what I had shared about Snaaq and čənsəʔəm.

As well participants shared relevant information with the group about Aboriginal history, whereas, other participants indicated a desire to learn more Aboriginal history. Claire talked about her volunteer work with the Museum of Anthropology and what she had learned about Aboriginal history through this work. As well she told the group of an upcoming event about
Aboriginal history and a lamppost that acknowledged Musqueam history in Kitsilano. Anne indicated she’d like to learn more about Aboriginal history specific to the land on which Kits House is being redeveloped. And Natalie mentioned she’d ask her Aboriginal Liaison colleague at work about the history of False Creek. Both Anne’s and Natalie’s desires to learn more Aboriginal history were perhaps in part sparked by what they had learned about Snaauq, and to a lesser extent, čəsnaʔəm, from the photos and stories I shared in workshops one and two.

**Learning to connect with place**

As a place-based educator I was also struck by several participants’ increased connection to place sparked by the learning they did in the group. For example, Jane explained:

I don’t feel any connection [to] the history of this place but for the Old Barn Community Center when I spent time learning its history I kinda feel more not like rooted but similar more comfortable staying there I think that’s what I learned from studying history helped me understanding the people and the place (Interview).

Likewise Natalie commented on her increased connection to Kitsilano:

I go around and think of each of the individuals and the stories that they told whether it was around the railway line or whether it was around the hippie days and hippie culture whether it was around UBC the barn out there so yeah I learned a lot about and it just brought it, it became more personal for me. So Kitsilano became more personal it’s not just a geographic place on a map where I happen to live and yes I have connections and friends and I do a lot in it but it was a different sort of personal (Interview).

Both Jane’s and Natalie’s reflections reinforce that a form of place-based learning occurred through the study group. These two participants acknowledged the potential for place-based education to increase their personal connections to a place.

**Learning as a facilitator**

As I outlined in Chapter 3 and the introduction of this chapter, I am cognizant of the challenging path I chose as a place-based facilitator. I found myself learning alongside my
participants—not only learning about (de)-colonization, but also about how to facilitate others’ learning on these topics. Throughout my research I kept track of my reflections in a research journal. In the following section I offer some key excerpts from my journal to provide insight into the facilitation process in which I engaged.

Three days before I facilitated the first workshop I wrote an entry in my research journal. I reflected:

_July 10, 2012_

I am excited about the first workshop, but I am also trying to find my footing too. Part of me feels like I’ve already missed the mark. I feel like I’ve depoliticized what I want to research. When I invited people to join the study group I invited them to learn about all types of local history. I did indicate that I was interested in how history might open up dialogues on present day intercultural relationships. I did talk directly about Aboriginal history. However, I also engaged people in dialogues about all types of history. … I am definitely fearful that the conversations will mainly revolve around uncritical white settler history...

Even before I began the workshops I was already sorting through the strengths and weaknesses of my specific decolonizing place-based education pedagogical choices. In the same entry I continued:

And how do I hold both convictions of anti-racism principles and yet be open to learning and open to others’ opinions? It just doesn’t work for me to be a ‘know it all’ anti-racist facilitator. Yet it’s hard not to get irate over racism once you start learning about it. There’s also the issue of being a white anti-racism facilitator and feeling limited by this position. In the _Dancing on Live Embers_ book (Lopes and Thomas, 2006) I was reminded of the many pitfalls that white anti-racist educators can fall into without really knowing it...
My reflections here highlight my struggle over my position as a White decolonizing, anti-racist educator. I indicate my concerns for finding a middle ground between challenging participants and yet also learning from participants. I also fear my own blind spots as a White facilitator, but I never fully resolved this concern during my research.

In the next journal excerpt I explain part of the reason I never resolved some of the tensions in my pedagogies. Between the first and second workshops I reflected:

_August 7, 2012_

I am doing multiple roles in this research. I am a researcher who needs to analyze her data and write it up. I am also a facilitator / educator who is trying to learn new pedagogies and ways to teach. I am also an event organizer who is trying to host several workshops. Plus I am an equipment organizer who is trying to use technology to capture her data. I hope it feels a bit less multi tasking once I get to the stage of interviews. I suspect I’ll feel more fully a researcher at that point? I guess I need to accept that I will be a bit more surface researcher/facilitator for now, given I’m juggling two and more roles.

Although I was able to integrate journal writing into my research, there were still limits to how much resolution I found in my reflection process. The preceding excerpt explains how taxed I felt with the multiple roles I juggled throughout the action research project.

About a week before the second workshop I found myself again questioning my own anti-racist practices. This excerpt returns to some of the doubts I expressed before the first workshop. I reflected:

_August 8, 2012_

I also continue to fear my own responsibility in anti-racism action. I know racism is prolific and systemic. I know I’m responsible in the system of racism and that I benefit from it. I am both reluctant to give this benefit up and also drawn to take action to change this unequal system. How to make sense of the ongoing, cyclical nature of violence and exploitation that is racially based? Do we just pick at the system that is currently unjust, and then a new group will still somehow become
the target of racism? But again plenty of people don’t have the privilege to question this. They are forced to struggle for their survival...

This gets to the inner conflict I have as an anti-racist educator. I am not a fabulous example of anti-racist ally. I am so-so and a mixed bag. How am I supposed to facilitate others’ allyship?! Perhaps I need to ground myself in more concrete anti-racist practices and struggles. Like what?…Shifting hiring policies at my job and other organizations, ally work with Aboriginal groups opposing the pipeline, relationship building between Musqueam and Kits House maybe around the Marpole Midden protests, anti-racist workshop facilitation for environmental activists, etc.

Of course I’d like to say that I resolved these tensions in my own anti-racism practices and that I found ways of supporting ally work among the participants. However, the short length of my research left little space for resolving these types of tensions in my chosen pedagogies. Instead my focus on my research did provide some space for me to refine my chosen pedagogies. Three days before workshop two I wrote:

_August 13, 2012_

Right now I’m not sure how to steer the conversations back to what I am interested in—grappling with violent historical legacies, especially aboriginal – non-aboriginal relationships.

I think at best I could facilitate a bit of a hybrid type discussion. I could try to make links to aboriginal histories and each person’s historical interest. Or I could ask them—so what does this all mean in a greater context? Or perhaps I learn that taking a historical approach doesn’t work too well. Or that I need to be more explicit. I’m not sure...

Ergg... I have to take some risks here in my facilitation. I probably need to be more explicit and talk directly about what interests me. This feels hard. Why? I think because it’s bound to be more contentious and conflictual. People will disagree with me. And I have trouble holding my ground and confidence when people have a different opinion. I am someone who can see others’ opinions and viewpoints
easily. I always see flaws and weaknesses and blind spots in my own opinions. But I still need to go for it. And I’ll learn more if I go for it. Sometimes I need to disagree with a person’s opinions. I guess it’s about learning how to respectfully disagree.

Here I push myself to find ways to engage the participants in the types of decolonizing dialogues I originally envisioned for the workshops. I also push myself to take more risks in my facilitation and to be prepared for conflict among participants.

After the second workshop, I again return to processing the tension in decolonizing pedagogies. I reflected:

_August 21, 2012_

I do feel conflicted about facilitating with an agenda and/or having really specific/political learning outcomes for the participants. The tension between inviting learning and multiple perspectives versus forcing people to learn a specific way of looking at the world (e.g. critical consciousness). I don’t think the forcing way works too well….if I think about this group, people might be really resistant if I forced them to agree with my opinions about reconciling history. Yet, I do feel some responsibility to push for social justice action. But again this is caught in my own worldview. Others may disagree. So maybe it’s key to be reminded that as a facilitator I am also a learner and participant….I still feel tension on this area especially in the context of decolonizing pedagogies and anti-racism education.

And I really need to work to be clearer with my participants about my interests. So they are not shocked by what they see me write.

The ongoing theme of striking a balance between engaging people and challenging them to understand (de)-colonization comes up for me in this excerpt. I also mention my struggles with clearly defining my research goals to my participants. My goals emerged throughout the research project, but I didn’t always feel I thoroughly communicated my goals to the participants.

The following day I continued to reflect on the first and second workshop. I wrote:
August 22, 2012

The uncomfortable question for me is what may come out of the workshops. It appears the participants will have gained a positive experience and learned a lot. However I am not sure to what extent something concretely decolonizing will come out of it. Yet that was a pretty ambitious goal at the start. My hope seems to now reside around some sort of ‘multiple perspectives’ historical narrative as a small step towards decolonization.

Here I begin making a shift in my decolonizing pedagogies. I begin to consider using a more multicultural approach, that being the use of multiple perspectives in the historical narratives. In the thick of research I was unaware of this shift occurring.

I became more aware of some of the shifts in my pedagogies a couple months after the third workshop was complete. As I began to undertake data analysis I reflected:

November 27, 2012

I’m reading my March 2012 research proposal and I am struck by how my facilitation focus changed. I originally wanted to do a decolonizing autobiography exercise with the group. Somewhere along the line I shifted towards learning neighbourhood history. What I have in my proposal is more decolonizing / directive learning. Then somewhere along the line I shifted to more open-ended facilitation. I think this partially came out of my dialogue with Kits House staff and their suggestions I make it into something people would want to do. This may have led it to be less decolonizing facilitation.

This reflection summarizes some of the shifts that occurred in my pedagogies during my research. These shifts tie back to my desire to engage people while wanting to challenge people. A tension that remained unresolved throughout the three workshops.

Sharing history at the new neighbourhood house

This third research question returns to the action phase of research to examine participants’ concrete ideas for acknowledging history at their new neighbourhood house. Kits House is redeveloping its main buildings and there are opportunities to represent and
acknowledge neighbourhood histories in a new way. As a facilitator my goal was to spark critical dialogue about how to share histories in decolonizing narratives at the new building. This section ponders the following question: how do members envision sharing ignored, forgotten and erased histories in their new neighbourhood house? In a sense this question looks at one end result of participants’ learning in the decolonizing place-based workshops.

When asked for their ideas about sharing history at the new Kits House, most participants offered concrete, specific ideas. They talked about creating historical displays, offering historical tours and talks, developing a resource of historical books, creating maps that would represent local history (similar to those in Mcdonald, 1992), showing videos, and using art. More specifically Sarah suggested that any new display should leave empty space that could be filled in by other community members.

In addition to these logistical ideas, the different participants offered ideas for what content could be included in the displays or historical acknowledgements. They talked about representing multiple stories in the new building including: Aboriginal, Greek, other immigrant histories and Hippie history. Anne said:

I think it would be good to have a photographic display of just different people who have lived in first of all that very space or that very place I should say we should start with the First Nations people and then the Greeks I guess are next and that would be neat just that very specific space and in general maybe like those maps in those books about what was going on in different places something along those lines that would be nice (Interview).

Her suggestions for Kits House included a number of the histories (Aboriginal and Greek) that the group had previously discussed.

Jane talked about a different approach to representing history. She suggested that Kits House could include different eras in a display. She explained, “I would be mostly interested in themes in different era[s], like for example the hippies, the historical icon, like similar to that I wonder if anything around this era that was typical of that time period” (Interview). Here she is interested in explaining history through depicting what was central to each different time period.
Natalie mentioned a history paper written by Dr. Sean Lauer from UBC as a possible resource for Kits House. She explained that Dr. Lauer and a student had looked specifically at the history of Kits House and its programs. Natalie’s description of Sean’s paper reminded me that the content of his paper could be included in whatever Kit House does to acknowledge its own history and that of the Westside.

In a response to questions about what she would like to learn as a follow up to the study group, Erin stated, “I’d like to learn more about the Indians or Pakistanis, when they came, what kind of an influence they have on the community, or any other people you know cause it’s got a lot of variety of immigrants” (Interview). Here she’s referring to the diversity of immigrants with connections to the Westside of Vancouver. Although she didn’t suggest including Indian and Pakistani history in the new Kits House, she did express an interest in learning more about this part of Westside history.

One of Claire’s comments in a workshop relates to the importance of acknowledging local history at Kits House:

"History of the place we are is something that we share with those who live around us so it’s one of the ways that you build or solidify your relationship with your neighbourhood. Cause that’s one thing for sure that everything else may be different but the place where you live has had a particular history." (Workshop 3).

Her reflection succinctly summarizes the potential of Kits House to draw together different communities through a place-based history.

**Historical collage**

In addition to brainstorming ideas for the new Kits House, the participants worked collectively on a collage of their historical stories. I explained that the collage would be shared publicly at a Kits House community celebration and may be displayed at other Kits House events. As outlined in Chapter 3, I invited the participants to share what they had learned with others through the collage. Below is a picture of the three-panel poster board collage created by the study group:
Figure 4: Collage, panel 1 (1880s-1950s)
Figure 5: Collage, panel 2 (1900s-1930s)
Figure 6: Collage, panel 3 (1960s-2010s)
As seen above, the collage is displayed in a linear, time-based structure. The oldest pictures and stories are the first panel of the collage (Figure 4) and the most recent pictures are to the last panel (Figure 6). This collage format, a fairly traditional historical timeline, organically emerged as the group decided how to display their historical photos. Between workshops two and three, participants collected pictures for the collage. The collage in general is somewhat limited by the images that were easily accessible.

In Figure 4, starting at the top left-hand corner, there is a picture of people on Greer’s Beach in 1897, below that are four photos of Snauq / Kitsilano Indian Reserve including past residents of the Reserve. On the right hand side of Figure 4 there are two photos of the railway development with a written description of the railway. Figure 5 is the second collage panel, starting in the left top corner, there is a picture of the beer made at the Old Brewery. To the left of this, is a picture of the Old Barn at UBC. The second row of photos starts with a portrait of Henry Reifel who built the Old Brewery. To the right of his portrait is a photo of squatter houses at Vanier Park that were burned and cleared away (1935). The photo caption explains that Squamish homes were also burned at this site (1913) when Squamish members were forced to relocate. The last picture in the second row shows a horse drawn carriage in front of! an advertisement for laundry soap. On the bottom row of pictures, to the left hand side, there is a photo of Arbutus Coffee Shop, followed by a picture of the Old Brewery and a picture of the Greek Orthodox Church (now the community hall at Kits House). Figure 6 is the third collage panel and the first row begins with a photo of a 1981 Vancouver map showing different ethnic backgrounds by neighbourhood. To the right of this map, there is a photo of the reconstructed UBC Barn with a quote from John Young’s daughter about her father’s role in saving the Old Barn. The next photo shows Musqueam protests at ə̓nasəʔəm / Marpole Midden. Directly below this photo, there are two photos of Vancouver’s rail system in 1977. To the left of these two photos, there are three photos of the hippie era and several symbols (e.g. peace sign) associated with the era. At the bottom of each collage panel is a hand-drawn railway track. The group added this as a connector between the different eras because the railway was referenced in many of their stories. These figures of the collage provide insight to the histories discussed in the study group and the juxtaposition between Indigenous histories
and visitor-settler histories. For the most part the different stories were discussed separately rather than finding connections between them.

Summary

To recap, this chapter outlines answers to my three research questions and in doing so draws heavily upon the reflections of action research participants. First, I summarized the views expressed in workshops and interviews about history, reconciliation, colonization and decolonization. As I mentioned previously, the group’s notion of history went largely unquestioned. As well, most participants related to reconciliation and somewhat to colonization, with decolonization being the term most confusing for participants. In the discussions of these concepts, participants expressed a range of beliefs about Aboriginal community members, some of which are concerning for decolonizing educators. Next, I highlighted what participants chose to learn about their local history topics and what they learned in relation to my descriptions of Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh histories. In addition I included excerpts from my research journal to illustrate my own learning process as a facilitator. Lastly, I reviewed the participants’ ideas for sharing local history at the new neighbourhood house. The group discussed both logistical and content ideas for possible ways to acknowledge histories. I also included a photo of the public collage the group collectively created at the end of the three workshops. The next chapter turns to a discussion of these research findings to investigate the implications for future decolonizing place-based pedagogies.
Chapter 5. Discussion

Introduction
This chapter begins with my general reflections on the workshops and then moves to an analysis of the decolonizing place-based pedagogies used in my study. I look at the potential of history and place as teaching tools and assess the impact of my ‘co-learning’, ‘everything is welcome’ facilitation style. I also consider the impact of using a ‘pedagogy for the privilege’ learning framework. The second section of Chapter 5 addresses the baseline with which I worked as a decolonizing place-based educator. Here I explore the implications of participants’ understanding of (de)-colonization. I also examine the contentious issues arising among participants. I ask whether there are resolutions to these contentious philosophical questions that would not further polarize debates about decolonization. In the following Chapter 6, Conclusion, I highlight my recommendations for refining decolonizing place-based pedagogies, discuss recommendations for Kits House’s history project and indicate where more research is needed.

What happened in this study?
I began this research project with a goal to facilitate decolonizing place-based learning among non-Indigenous learners. Now when I reflect upon this goal, why did I want to do this? I wanted to find a way to do ‘good’ place-based education since I love connecting learners to a place. Yet I knew place-based learning rarely addressed the colonization of these places. Parallel to my search for decolonizing place-based pedagogies was also a search for finding critical pedagogies that worked for me and other privileged learners. Before I did this study I had had my own challenging experiences in anti-oppression, anti-racism and anti-capitalist workshops. When I began working with Kits House I thought it was a great place to do decolonizing place-based education. Hence my study began, but then I was presented with a new challenge—how to actually talk to other adults in my own neighbourhood about colonization? This seemed like a daunting task—one that I worried would alienate people. I mean, in reality, when do non-Indigenous people talk about colonization and decolonization? Not too frequently. Not to mention that I had my own hang ups on these concepts.

Somewhat ignoring the treacherous terrain I had embarked on, I began with fervor to set up an action research study. Kits House staff was interested in learning about local history and so I thought that this might be a good way to open dialogue about colonization. I decided to invite Kits House members to learn about forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler histories of the
Westside. Underneath this open invitation, I was hoping that people would have the same interests as me. I suppose this is the classic novice action researcher’s mistake! How couldn’t people gravitate towards learning more about Aboriginal histories and the relationships between Aboriginals, immigrants and settlers? I put out this invitation and found a group of women who were interested in forming a history study group.

Once I began facilitating the workshops I found it hard to process what was happening because I was planning three workshops and collecting data. Retrospectively I don’t think I fully explained my research questions to the study group in sufficient detail and in reality I didn’t know my research questions until the study was nearly complete. I think this was a mistake on my part as a novice researcher and educator in decolonizing pedagogies. The quotes and focus of the workshops really reflect the dual reality that began to emerge between my original interest in local (de)-colonization and the interests of the other learners. Basically it got messier than I had anticipated. I got caught up in understanding the different worldviews of the participants. It was fascinating to me how other non-Indigenous peoples in my neighbourhood didn’t have the same desire to learn about Aboriginal histories and colonization and to participate in decolonization. Few people were drawn to actively participating in decolonizing activities at Kits House. As a facilitator / researcher, I felt uncomfortable to engage with more directive and critical pedagogies that might have re-focused the group’s study on (de)-colonization. I could give a long list of excuses here about why I felt this discomfort, but it’s sufficient to summarize by saying I was uncomfortable facilitating the type of learning I so desperately wanted to facilitate.

I wasn’t aware of this dynamic until I began writing this thesis and talking to other graduate students and professors. Basically as long as I was engaging with participants and Kits House staff I felt drawn to more liberal understandings of history. When I returned to the academic context I picked up articles again about critical, decolonizing theories and realized how I didn’t fully pursue these pedagogies with the study group. I felt I had been doing a dance between what is possible (dialogues about any forgotten histories) and what is needed (dialogues about colonization and decolonization). In the middle of this dance I found myself reflecting on what worked and didn’t work in the place-based pedagogies I used.
Historical, place-based approaches to decolonizing pedagogies

Adopting a historical, decolonizing place-based pedagogy provides opportunities and significant challenges for engaging predominately non-Indigenous learners. As mentioned in Chapter 4, nearly all the participants indicated they had originally been motivated to join the group to learn about local history. In other words, history was the hook that drew people into the study group. Their interest in learning history offered spaces to discuss the contested nature of history and the impact of history on today’s community relationships. These discussions opened a space for dialogue about Aboriginal history, colonization, decolonization and reconciliation; however, these discussions were paralleled by a predominate focus on learning visitor-settler histories.

The potential of historical place-based studies to facilitate learning about (de)-Colonization is highlighted in Claire’s reflections (p. 41) on how she learned about the social and political context of the time in her railway research. She learned about the prejudice experienced by Irish immigrants as she read newspaper articles that referenced Sam Greer, an Irish immigrant and key person opposing the railway development. If Claire or other participants had focused on different historical events or perhaps examined their specific historical topic in greater depth, the historical racism and colonization experienced by Aboriginal peoples may have become apparent to them. This could initiate discussions on multiple forms of exploitation and oppression experienced by different groups, including Aboriginal peoples.

Combining historical studies with place-based learning appears to have potential for connecting people more deeply to a specific locality. Jane (p. 44) mentioned learning more about the people and place through her historical study of the Old UBC Barn and that she felt more comfortable in the place as a result; Natalie (p. 44) talked about having a stronger personal connection to Kitsilano, and Claire (p. 51) referred to building relationships among neighbours through understanding the history of a place. These three participants experienced community connections through their historical place-based studies. This deepening community connection is exactly what Sobel (2004) articulates in his vision for place-based education and parallels Scully’s (2012) notion that “[p]laces are the literal common ground” (p.152) from which we can teach and learn. The unresolved question is whether this deeper connection and common ground opens learning about the contested nature of places (Somerville, 2007) and whether it facilitates learning about (de)-colonization.
Based on the responses from the participants some learners appeared receptive to the critical and decolonizing place-based learning called for by Greenwood (2003, 2009, 2010). When I shared stories about Snaq and čəsnaʔəm, people undeniably engaged. This decolonizing pedagogical choice appeared to spark further dialogue about Aboriginal history, community relationships and Aboriginal peoples. Natalie (p. 43) disclosed that she went home and researched the Indian Act in part due to the discussions we had had at the workshop. Anne indicated at the end of the first workshop, after our initial discussion about Snaq, that she would like to learn more about the Aboriginal history specific to Kits House’s location. Both Natalie and Anne expressed a desire to learn more after their initial learning about specific local, Aboriginal history. Their reactions indicate the potential for explicit historical, place-based decolonizing pedagogies to facilitate learning about colonization, Aboriginal history and current day policies.

Although the decolonizing pedagogies incorporated into the workshops showed potential to facilitate learning about (de)-colonization, there were challenges to adopting a historical lens. For the most part participants chose history topics that had personal relevance to them and as a result, nearly all the topics researched focused on visitor-settler histories. I attempted to facilitate dialogue about different perspectives in relation to their chosen history topics. This included asking questions about who else might be connected to their history topics and showing examples of historical narratives from different perspectives (e.g. showing three vignettes from 125 Vancouver video). Participants didn’t verbally reflect on how their history topics could be understood from different perspectives nor did they explicitly explore how colonization shaped the historical events or places that they studied. In some ways we spent a large amount of time learning about history from a predominately visitor-settler perspective. As I previously mentioned my original pedagogical choices assumed participants would have had a stronger reaction to learning about Snaq and čəsnaʔəm. I had expected participants to delve into the history of colonization in relation to their chosen historical topics. Further research is needed to determine how to facilitate this type of critical learning when using a historical, place-based pedagogy with visitor-settlers.

**Pedagogy for the privileged – is it a useful framework?**

I consider the pedagogies employed in my workshops to be forms of a pedagogy for the privileged, a term adopted from Curry-Stevens (2007). Although Curry-Stevens outlines a ten-
step pedagogy for the privileged model, I use her term more broadly to refer to a range of pedagogies aimed at engaging privileged learners. In the case of this study, I worked predominately with non-Indigenous learners to learn about (de)-colonization. In the following section, I consider the impact of working with a predominately privileged group of learners and consider what pedagogies facilitated learning.

Curry-Stevens’s model

The term pedagogy for the privileged comes from a ten-step workshop model outlined by Curry-Stevens (2007) in which she teaches privileged learners about oppression. Here I am referring to oppression as, “the inequitable use of authority, law, or physical force to prevent others from being free or equal” (Women’s History, 2013). Figure 4 summarizes Curry-Stevens’s recommended learning steps for teaching about oppression.

| Step 1: Awareness of oppression |
| Step 2: Oppression as structural and thus enduring and pervasive |
| Step 3: Locating oneself as oppressed |
| Step 4: Locating oneself as privileged |
| Step 5: Understanding the benefits that flow from privilege |
| Step 6: Understanding oneself as implicated in the oppression of others and understanding oneself as an oppressor |
| Step 7: Building confidence to take action—knowing how to intervene |
| Step 8: Planning actions for departure |
| Step 9: Finding supportive connections to sustain commitments |
| Step 10: Declaring intentions for future action |

Figure 7: Ten-step model of pedagogy for the privileged (adapted from Curry-Stevens, 2007)

In this model she argues that learners must first see themselves as oppressed (Step 3) before they are able and willing to see themselves as privileged (Step 4). Her model also includes two
phases, phase one (steps 1-6) is a confidence-shaking process and phase two (steps 7-10) is a confidence-building phase. For Curry-Stevens it is imperative to integrate action planning into a pedagogy for the privileged. Although this teaching model takes a considerable number of steps before the action-planning phase (Steps 7-10), I found the model to be helpful for working with participants who had not participated previously in extensive anti-oppression training. I loosely adopted Curry-Stevens’s two phases into my decolonizing place-based pedagogies in the sense that I began by sharing stories to increase participants’ awareness of colonization and then turned to action planning for acknowledging histories at Kits House.

Although Curry-Stevens’s model has limitations as it is based on a binary understanding of oppression where there are privileged and oppressed peoples, this model did resonate with some of the participants’ responses. Anne and Claire both spontaneously made reference to their ancestors experiencing oppression. This aligns with Step 3 when learners first see themselves as oppressed. For Claire, she related to Sam Greer as an Irish immigrant and was interested in the prejudice experience by Irish immigrants because of her own Irish ancestry. For Anne she responded to my reflection in workshop two about history’s present day impact by saying, “if we looked at all our personal histories we could go back even a generation or two, not that far back, when we’ve been victimized or and also we’ve been victimizers” (Workshop 2). Anne connects Steps 3 and 4 simultaneously, when she refers to both victims and victimizers. This may reflect her Metis heritage. In both cases participants made connections to forms of oppression or experiences of victimization.

As I outlined in Chapter 4, three participants (Anne, Claire and Natalie) also acknowledged their personal connections to colonization. Although they didn’t explicitly use terms like oppressor and oppressed, their responses do indicate that they were thinking about their relationship to colonization. Their responses parallel Step 4, where participants begin to acknowledge their privilege. If there had been more time in the workshops, I would have explored whether participants would have engaged in an explicit discussion of their relationship to privilege and oppression in the context of colonization.

In terms of the confidence-building phase of this pedagogy (steps 7-10), I integrated opportunities for this type of learning into the workshops. I asked participants to identify ideas for acknowledging histories at Kits House. My original intention was to create opportunities for participants to actively envision decolonizing historical representations that could be displayed at
Kits House. In reality, this goal may have been overly ambitious for a set of three, two-hour workshops. Predominately, participants brainstormed more how to represent histories rather than what to represent. Although discussions about Kits House were somewhat limited, Anne did suggest a photo display of past residents, including Indigenous, Greeks and other community residents (p. 50). Claire and I also had a phone discussion after the last workshop where she suggested Musqueam members could be involved in sharing history at Kits House. Specifically she suggested Musqueam members could participate in the grand opening of the new neighbourhood house. Both Anne’s and Claire’s suggestions provide examples of participants wanting to acknowledge Indigenous history. I consider their responses to be examples of the type of action planning Curry-Stevens envisions in her learning model. Participants did engage in action planning, but not action planning on decolonizing histories at Kits House.

Facilitating learning as a co-learner in decolonization

In the preceding section I explained how my findings align with Curry-Stevens’s pedagogy for the privilege framework. In this section, I want to consider the implications of my findings for a more broadly defined version of pedagogy for the privileged. As I mentioned in my literature review in Chapter 2, I adopted Regan (2010) and Moosa-Mitha’s suggestion of becoming a learner rather than an expert in my decolonizing pedagogy. I presented myself as a co-learner, facilitator and researcher within the action research project. Acting as a co-learner was foundational to the pedagogy for the privileged approach I adopted. First this role allowed me to learn about (de)-colonization in my own neighbourhood, something, as a privileged learner, I knew little about, and secondly, it allowed me to share what I had learned about Snauq and čəsnaʔəm with the other participants. The dialogues sparked by my presentations on Snauq and čəsnaʔəm may have been different if I had been an expert in local Aboriginal histories. There may have been less space for participants to ask questions if I had presented a more ‘expert’ type of presentation to the group. In a sense I invited the participants to co-learn with me rather than rely on me as a source of expert information. It also allowed me to ask questions about colonization, decolonization and reconciliation, with the curiosity of a learner wanting to hear different perspectives. In essence, being a co-learner facilitator contributed to an opening of dialogue with other participants.

The depth to which I acted as a co-learner became clearer upon reviewing the excerpts from my research journal I included in Chapter 4. Many of the terms I used with my participants,
such as decolonization, are terms I continue to learn about as a privileged learner myself. After leading the workshops I now realize I do not have a clear vision of what decolonization looks like for visitor-settlers and this is precisely why I undertook this research project. However, this left my ability to facilitate decolonizing place-based pedagogies somewhat limited. This insecurity also led me to add the term reconciliation to the study partially because this term is more familiar to me. Again this underscores the limitations of a co-learner attempting to facilitate decolonizing place-based learning—limitations that would need to be addressed in future workshops.

‘Everything is welcome’ facilitation

One of the choices I made as a facilitator was to take an ‘everything is welcome’ approach to my decolonizing pedagogies and pedagogy for the privilege framework. I offered an invitation to participants to learn about forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler histories on the Westside of Vancouver. I encouraged participants to decide for themselves what to research in their neighbourhood. Overall, I found that the form of pedagogy for the privileged I enacted in my study opened up dialogue, allowed participants to pursue their own historical research, but also left too much space for expressing negative, and in some cases, racist views about Indigenous communities.

On the positive side, participants talked about feeling welcomed and comfortable during the workshops. Natalie said the workshops were, “very collaborative, very respectful, you made a very welcoming environment, I think people were very comfortable to talk. I think everybody had something to say” (Interview). Similarly, Mary said, “you know you kept it open enough that we could come out with our own ideas and which was great and you added a little play in there you know with the drawing and things so you made it kind of fun…” (Interview). Both Mary and Natalie describe the active participation of group members in response to this facilitation style. This was exciting feedback to receive and I think may be one of the advantages of having a non-Indigenous facilitator lead fairly open-ended learning about colonization with predominately non-Indigenous learners.

On the negative side, the congregating of predominately non-Indigenous learners, in a self-directed learning environment inadvertently opened space for perpetuating stereotypes and a distancing from or ‘othering’ of Indigenous peoples. As I explained in Chapter 4, participants voluntarily and repeatedly shared their opinions about Indigenous peoples. Participants and I
often referred to ‘Aboriginals’ during the workshops rather than referencing specific Indigenous Nations. Our dialogues clumped Indigenous peoples into a homogenous group of ‘other’ people rather than increasing an understanding of the complexities of Indigenous Nations. As Schick and St. Denis (2005) explain, whiteness as a norm requires the “Other” in order to define and maintain whiteness. Although not all participants were White, the majority were non-Indigenous, and as such Indigenous peoples became the “Other” in contrast to the study group participants.

Participants did not question their assumptions about Indigenous communities nor did they question their own position as privileged learners. In several instances the dialogues fell into a dynamic described by Schick and St. Denis (2005):

First, dominant cultural practices are always ‘on,’ always the standard or fallback position for ‘the way things are done.’ This gives enormous privilege to those whose histories, ethnic backgrounds, social class, family assumptions, and personal knowledge are in line with these dominant practices. Second, the fact that these practices are not the norm for everyone and that one’s achievements may be at the expense of others is often an invisible reality for privileged groups.

In the ‘everything is welcome’ facilitation style, many assumptions about history went unquestioned because they aligned with dominant (i.e. visitor-settler) understandings of history. This dynamic needs to be addressed in future pedagogies for the privileged. There is a tension between creating learning space for non-Indigenous peoples to ‘do their homework’ (Spivak, 1990) on colonization and mistakenly creating safe spaces to air negative and stereotypical opinions about Indigenous peoples. In the end the ‘everything is welcome’ approach, even when combined with critical question posing, did not go far enough to facilitate learning about (de)-colonization among privileged learners.

Understanding participants’ worldviews

Taking a closer look at participants’ understanding of (de)-colonization and reconciliation is also important for understanding the baseline with which I worked in my pedagogy for the privileged. A challenge and opportunity for the specific decolonizing place-based pedagogies I used in the workshops became apparent when several participants (Jane, Natalie and Erin) initially associated colonization and decolonization with international events. Their initial
responses indicate they have more clarity about colonization and decolonization elsewhere in the world. This shows a need for decolonizing place-based pedagogies that would expand learners’ understanding of these global forces in a localized context. Mercier’s (2011) notion of glocal learning is much needed here.

Another theme that arose was most clearly expressed by Anne when she talked about the ongoing nature of exploitation of vulnerable people (p. 37). Her words about exploitation in combination with participants' initial international associations with colonization left me to ponder how to acknowledge the ‘it’s human nature’ response. Perhaps a more fruitful approach to teaching about colonization is to underscore it has occurred in many places and at many different times, but that there is still a need to address it in its present-day forms. Acknowledging the potential for all peoples to exploit, while simultaneously acknowledging White people’s role in colonization in the local context, may alleviate the paralyzing spiral of white guilt, which often arises in anti-racism education. Providing a summary of international instances of colonization throughout history, may provide context to learners to acknowledge their role in colonization without loosing perspective on the potential for any human with privilege to benefit from exploitation of vulnerable peoples.

The fact that participants related least to the term decolonization is unsurprising as this term is not widely used in mainstream media. If one of the new goals of place-based pedagogies is to engage learners in actively participating in decolonization (Greenwood, 2009; Scully, 2012), then there is a need to articulate what is meant by decolonization. The pedagogy I used in the workshops, especially in the last workshop in which I discussed historical representation at Kits House, assumed that participants would have a stronger understanding of decolonization. If I were to facilitate similar workshops again, I would first ask participants for their understandings of (de)-colonization and then I would also offer a description of these two concepts. I would consider asking the direct question—how could we decolonize historical representations at Kits House? As well as, how could we decolonize our relationships with Indigenous peoples, specifically Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations? This approach would also require that I, as a facilitator, have a better understanding of decolonization. Basically in future workshops I would spend more dedicated time to articulating a vision of decolonization in the local context.
Arising contentions
As outlined in my findings in Chapter 4, several contentious themes arose in the workshops and interviews. Taking a closer look at these contentions provides insight for decolonizing place-based pedagogies. First there were different opinions about the importance of history, specifically wrongs done in the past (e.g. past colonization) versus current day social problems. Both Anne and Natalie suggested a need to focus on the present rather than the past. For Anne, she talked about the need to address present day exploitation (p. 30) and referred to present day incidences of de facto slavery (p. 37). She also advocated to avoid taking history personally (p. 36). In contrast to my own views, she argued that people are not responsible for the actions of their ancestors. For Natalie, she recommended moving beyond the past and implied the need to create present day solutions with First Nations people (p. 32). Their responses highlight an unresolved tension amongst participants’ opinions regarding the impact of colonization and history. The pedagogies I employed in the workshops had assumed that the past intimately shapes the present and that there was a need to address past wrongs in order to reconcile present day relationships and inequalities. My understanding of colonization was not mirrored by most of the participants. The participant who came the closest to expressing a similar view was Mary (p. 30) when she said past prejudices still have an impact on people today. If I were to facilitate workshops in the future, I would create more time to discuss the impact of historical colonization on today’s relationships, inequalities and social problems. I would also clarify that we may not be personally responsible for our ancestors’ actions, but that we are responsible for dealing with their repercussions, addressing the resulting inequalities, and acknowledging our own resulting privileges. This would allow for a more in-depth discussion of the impact of history in our current communities.

Another closely related assumption in my decolonizing pedagogies is a need to reconcile past wrongs. Natalie contradicted this assumption when she questioned the need for Kits House to participate in reconciliation (p. 33). From her perspective, Kits House has not committed a specific wrong that needs to be reconciled. Again this differs from my understanding that Kits House, like any organization or person existing today in Canada, continues to have a relationship to colonization. Underlying this understanding is a specific understanding of colonization as an ongoing political process rather than only linked to the point of initial contact between
Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Again here, I would spend more time in future workshops discussing participants’ understanding of the need for reconciliation.

The underlying tension in the debates on the past and present display an unresolved issue in my decolonizing pedagogy. To what extent as facilitators do we impose or argue for our own (or a specific group’s) understanding of reality (i.e. ontology)? This is something I went back and forth on throughout my facilitation. Decolonizing pedagogies have an explicit agenda, but is it effective or ethical to push a specific worldview on a set of learners? Is there a way out of potentially dichotomous debates around issues such as the role of history in today’s social inequalities and exploitations? At this point I earmark this as an area requiring further research in the field of decolonizing place-based pedagogies.

Summary
Returning to my original overarching research question, I have reflected on how decolonizing place-based pedagogies can encourage visitor-settlers to learn about colonization, decolonization and ally work. The pedagogies I used in the workshops did not go as far as I had originally envisioned. I set out to facilitate decolonizing place-based learning; however, after facilitating three workshops I realize that this goal was more ambitious and more complex than I had originally realized. Based on participants’ reflections in the workshops and interviews I can say that the pedagogies I used initiated conversations about colonization, decolonization, reconciliation and the impact of historical wrongs. However, these discussions did not lead to further discussions on how to decolonize as visitor-settlers nor did they lead to discussions about allyship and Indigenous sovereignty. Given the limitations of the workshops and the views expressed by participants, I offer reflections in the concluding chapter about how to refine place-based pedagogies to facilitate decolonizing learning among visitor-settlers.
Chapter 6. Conclusion

Introduction

In this concluding chapter I return to the big picture to consider the significance of my findings for other educators. Specific recommendations for strengthening decolonizing place-based pedagogies are presented. I also make recommendations for Kits House with attention paid to decolonizing community relationships through acknowledging history at the new neighbourhood house. Throughout this concluding chapter I highlight several areas where more research is needed in the field of decolonizing place-based pedagogies. I end the chapter with a return to the specific Kits House context and share my reflections as a researcher in this action research project. I conclude my thesis by leaving the reader with a few questions to ponder at the end of our journey together.

Recommendations for decolonizing place-based pedagogies

In this section I summarize how I would re-shape a decolonizing place-based pedagogy in future work with a similar group of privileged learners. I have touched upon many of these recommendations briefly in Chapters 4 and 5, but here I present a holistic portrait of the decolonizing place-based pedagogies I envision. I also earmark the need for further research in specific areas within this educational field.

If I were to work with a similar group of people again, I would adopt a place-based and historical approach. The discussions and learning sparked by my recount of Snauq and čəsnaʔəm have potential to contribute to participants’ understanding of colonization. However, I would also be more specific in the invitation questions I would pose to the learners. Rather than inviting them to learn about forgotten Aboriginal, immigrant and settler histories, I would ask: what relationships existed historically between Aboriginal, immigrant and settler communities? How does historical exploitation impact Aboriginal, immigrant and settler communities in our neighbourhood today? Additionally, I would ask questions posed by Scully (2012). Working with student teachers, she invites learners to research a specific place of personal importance to them and to answer the following questions: “What is the treaty region? Whose traditional territory is it in? If this is contested, tell the stories. What is the name of the community/ies in their own languages? Is there a cultural or an education outreach person?” (p. 154). Although the first question is not relevant in most of BC, where treaties were never signed, this question could be re-worded to ask what it means to live on unceded territories. The other questions posed by
Scully are relevant to the BC context and could be used in future workshops. The questions I suggest and Scully’s questions would still allow for self-directed learning by adult participants, but may lead to more explicit learning about colonization through place-based studies.

In future workshops, I would also spend more time discussing different cultural understandings of history. I would include a discussion of Aboriginal cultures’ notions of time and place. As well I would acknowledge what came before people in a place—that is the trees, animals and other non-human residents of the place. Here I would expect more dialogue among participants about their understandings of the past and present. There would be a need to wade through whether people agree that the past impacts today, and whether there is a need to address the present day legacies of historical exploitations, specifically colonization. These discussions are needed before learners are ready to discuss the need for decolonization and/or their role as allies in decolonization.

Following discussions about the relationship of the past with the present, I would take time to discuss participants’ ideas about decolonization. I would offer definitions of decolonization, concrete examples of community-based decolonization initiatives and would also share my own learning journey in decolonization. As a facilitator I would increase my understanding of decolonization before attempting to facilitate such a dialogue. This type of dialogue would hopefully contribute to participants articulating what it means to personally and collectively decolonize their relationships with Indigenous peoples.

Additionally I would increase my own understanding of the term reconciliation—both its limitations and opportunities—before using it in future workshops. It wasn’t until I had written the first draft of this thesis that one of my committee members explained that there isn’t an equivalent term in many Indigenous languages and that Indigenous decolonizing scholars focus on Indigenous resurgence rather than reconciliation. This led me to reflect more deeply on the assumptions inherent in my choice to focus on reconciliation. The use of this term refocused discussions of decolonization around relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members. As a result the other pieces of decolonization that Kits House and visitor-settlers could engage in did not get discussed. Somehow the allure of relationship building blinded myself as a facilitator and the participants from considering other ways to engage in decolonizing activities.
I would also integrate more arts-based activities into future decolonizing place-based pedagogies. The use of photos, drawings and a collage engaged participants to share their stories and Mary noted her particular enjoyment of these creative activities (p. 64). Ball and Lai (2006) specifically call for arts-based, critical place-based studies to facilitate learning about “larger-than-local socioecological transformation” (p. 270). Here I recommend arts-based activities to facilitate learning about a specific socioecological transformation, that being decolonization.

Secondly, I recommend arts-based learning to address Callahan’s (2004) concern that critical pedagogy’s often rational, non-emotional approach may lead to inaction among learners. She argues that critical educators need to find ways to nurture the emotional health of their students; educators need to be prepared to address the emotions that often arise in critical education, everything from fear, anger, guilt, shame, hope, excitement, anxiety and depression. In the context of decolonizing place-based pedagogies, arts-based learning could provide an outlet for processing the many emotions that both participants and facilitators may experience.

In future workshops, I would draw more heavily upon anti-racism education literature to inform some of my pedagogical choices. As I’ve outlined in the Findings and Discussion Chapters, I found facilitation challenging since I was simultaneously learning about decolonization and addressing my own privilege as a White person. More research is needed to address the limitations of non-Indigenous facilitators in decolonizing pedagogies. The writings by anti-racist educators could provide insights here, as discussions among White and racialized co-facilitators are prevalent in the literature (see Lopes and Thomas, 2006, Section 4, p. 220-239 for an example). In an ideal world, I would seek opportunities to co-facilitate decolonizing place-based workshops with more experienced educators, including Indigenous and ally educators. However, I am cognizant of the limited number of potential co-facilitators available in this field and the multiple requests Indigenous educators juggles. If co-facilitators were not available, I would increase the amount of resources used in the workshops that were written or narrated by Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous allies.

Recommendations for Kits House

Part of the action phase of the research project focused on brainstorming ideas for acknowledging history at the new Kits House. As I’ve outlined in the Chapter 4 Findings section, participants most quickly suggested concrete ways to represent history at Kits House (p. 50). I’ll
begin with a discussion of participants’ recommendations for Kits House and then add my additional ideas to this discussion.

Claire’s suggestion to engage Musqueam members in the process at Kits House, and to invite members to participate at the grand opening of the new building, is an example of the type of ideas I imagined discussing with the group. As part of decolonizing historical narratives, I agree with Claire that there is a need to form more relationships between the Musqueam Nation and Kits House. Forming these relationships require careful navigation of present day colonial relationships. Unfortunately, the study group didn’t discuss how to engage with Indigenous Nations, especially Musqueam, in the Kits House history project. This may be in part due to the open-ended question (i.e. how could we represent forgotten histories at Kits House?) I posed to the group. Rather, the group focused on the concrete ideas of how to represent history. They talked about things like displays, videos and libraries. These are all important suggestions that Kits House could use, but they do not automatically decolonize historical narratives. The content of these representations and the process by which these representations would be created require more discussion.

Sarah’s suggestion of leaving space in whatever display might be created at Kits House, struck me as having the potential to engage a larger group of Kits House members in the history project. Anne’s suggestion of a photo display representing the different inhabitants (she explicitly named First Nations and Greeks) of the area, over different time periods, also has potential to engage a diverse group of people. Anne’s and Sarah’s ideas may point to a desire by these participants to work with different groups of people in creating historical acknowledgments at Kits House.

At the end of the study group most participants indicated a desire to continue learning about different local histories. The example I provide in Chapter 4 included Erin’s request to learn about Indian and Pakistani histories of the Westside (p. 51). From my perspective Kits House could capitalize on the participants’ interest in history to further facilitate learning about different communities on the Westside. This would need to be done carefully to avoid the pitfall of tokenizing different racialized and Indigenous groups’ histories. However, if learning history were paralleled with Kits House forming relationships with different community members, and with a discussion of past and present impacts of racism within these relationships, then this could meaningfully diversify Kits House’s membership.
Based on what happened in the workshops, there is still more opportunities to learn about local Indigenous histories and to open a dialogue about decolonization. I recommend that Kits House consider hosting additional community dialogues on local histories, especially on the relationship between Indigenous, immigrant and visitor-settlers historically (see preceding section for detailed workshop suggestions). These dialogues could be modeled after the series hosted by the City of Vancouver called the Vancouver Dialogues: First Nations, Urban Aboriginal and Immigrant Communities (City of Vancouver, 2011), except that they would also include settlers in the dialogues. Similarly there may be opportunities for Kits House to host ongoing study circles like the one I facilitated. Several participants (Erin, Anne, Sarah and possibly others) indicated a desire to remain involved in the study group and Jane suggested diversifying the participants to include more newcomers like her.

As part of its history project, Kits House could become involved in the preparations for the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission public hearings to be held in Vancouver in September 2013. For example there is a series of Bright New Day Reconciliation Circles (www.brightnewday.ca) occurring in Vancouver and across BC, which could provide decolonizing learning opportunities for Kits House staff or members. Kits House’s potential participation in workshops or in the Truth and Reconciliation meetings could offer learning opportunities to staff and members about local residential schools and their impacts on Musqueam and other Nations. By participating in this process they may also have opportunities to meet Musqueam members and to form relationships around concrete work to address the legacy of residential schools in BC. Likewise, the Idle No More movement has been actively hosting information events for allies. If additional educational events are organized as part of the movement there may be opportunities for Kits House members to attend these events as a way to learn more about (de)-colonization in Canada.

A recent student residence development at UBC also offers Kits House some additional ideas for its re-development. In 2011 UBC added two new residence buildings in an area referred to as Totem Park. This residence complex had six existing buildings named: Dene, Haida, Kwakiutl, Nootka, Salish and Shuswap. These names were given to the buildings in the 1960s and UBC’s website now acknowledges that some of these names are anthropological terms rather than Indigenous names. In preparation for naming the two new residence buildings, an advisory committee was formed with student residents, Musqueam cultural advisors, Student
Housing and Hospitality Services, the First Nation House of Learning and Campus and Community Planning. As a result of this process, the two new buildings were named ḥəʔ�əʔəm (hum-le-some)² and q̓əłəχən (cul-le-hon), both words in the hən'q̓əmin̓əm' (h-un-q̓-uh-mi-n-uhm) language, written in the International Phonetic Alphabet (UBC Student Housing, 2013). The UBC Student Housing website provides an explanation of these two Musqueam words and their significance to specific nearby places, along with a pronunciation guide (written and audio) and answers to some frequently asked questions about the words (see www.housing.ubc.ca/totem-park/totem-overview/389). This approach of acknowledging Musqueam place names offers some interesting decolonizing learning opportunities for UBC students. Acknowledging significant Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh places in Kitsilano could be another consideration for Kits House as it redevelops its buildings at Vine St. and West 7th Avenue.

**Significance of findings**

For place-based educators, my research findings call for a decolonizing shift in their educational practices. Throughout this thesis I have presented a framework for using place to teach about (de)-colonization while simultaneously deepening learners’ connection to place. My findings offer insight into refining these place-based decolonizing pedagogies and highlight some of the challenges non-Indigenous facilitators face when working with predominately non-Indigenous learners in this field. Sharing stories about the colonization of neighbourhood lands, and Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh ties to this land, sparked further discussions about colonization, reconciliation and Indigenous peoples among participants. At the same time, there were limitations to my pedagogical choices as much of the independent research done by the participants focused exclusively on visitor-settler histories, without a direct analysis of how colonization impacted these histories. To avoid a similar pattern in future educational workshops, I recommended several changes to the pedagogies I employed in the study. In summary, my study identified a need to carefully select study questions that would guide learners to focus more specifically on colonial relationships among Indigenous, immigrant and settlers. I also recommended that place-based educators draw upon arts-based activities and anti-racist pedagogies to facilitate learning on (de)-colonization. The pedagogical framework I used in the

---

workshops and my subsequent recommendations contribute to refining effective facilitation strategies for working with privileged learners in decolonizing place-based studies.

For those educators working specifically in Indigenous and non-Indigenous dialogues, my findings offer suggestions for how to better prepare non-Indigenous learners to engage in these reconciliation processes. Based on my findings, I continue to advocate for non-Indigenous peoples to do their homework (Spivak, 1990), specifically learning about the historical legacy of colonization locally, before participating in reconciliation dialogues. However, my findings also suggest the need to further envision decolonizing actions non-Indigenous learners can take in their own communities.

**Emerging research areas**

The findings of this study contribute to expanding the educational research field of decolonizing place-based education. However, this field of inquiry is relatively small and much more research is needed to fully articulate pedagogies that contribute to decolonizing place-based learning, especially among privileged learners. First I would recommend that more research be conducted on the potential of historical place-based pedagogies to facilitate learning about (de)-colonization. My research looked at a small number of learners and I would suggest additional studies are needed in a range of community contexts and with a larger number of learners.

Another area of research only briefly touched upon in my thesis is how to engage racialized immigrants in decolonizing place-based learning. More research is needed to understand racialized immigrants’ experiences with local places and how to best facilitate their learning about local colonization. Another interesting follow-up study could examine the second stage of learning in historical place-based studies. Here I would recommend a group of learners participate in a two-phase educational program. The first phase would be similar to the workshops I facilitated and this would be followed by a second set of more advanced educational workshops. In this second set of workshops, I would study whether more interest in decolonization is expressed among participants who have previously learned about local colonization processes. As this chapter has offered recommendations for improving decolonizing pedagogies, there is also a need to further research whether these new pedagogies do indeed facilitate learning about (de)-colonization.

In addition to empirical research there is a need for further theorizing in the field of decolonizing place-based pedagogies. Specifically the three fields of place-based education,
decolonizing pedagogies and anti-racism education need to be woven together to inform future
decolonizing place-based pedagogies. The present study began this process, but leaves much
more space for further theorizing amongst these educational fields.

**Reflections as an action researcher at Kits House**

As an action researcher, I return once more to the specific study site to reflect on the
research findings and their implications for Kits House. As I outlined earlier in this chapter, there
is a range of work that Kits House could do to decolonize historical representations in its new
building. In many ways action planning for Kits House was not fully actualized given the short
timeframe of this project. Despite the limited action planning done in the study group, I have
offered a set of initial recommendations for Kits House. Given that Kits House staff has a desire
to acknowledge history at the new building and also to further relationships with Musqueam, it is
logical to work on these two goals simultaneously. Essentially one of the key recommendations
here is for Kits House to consider how to use its history project to meaningfully invite both
Musqueam members, and other community members to share in decolonizing local histories at
the new building.

As I bring my study at Kits House to a close, I am struck by the continuing opportunity to
participate in action research at this community organization. Kits House has been consistently
welcoming and supportive to me as an action researcher. My project is only a first step in
decolonizing community relationships at Kits House. More community-based research is needed
to envision decolonization and Kits House is a strong partner in future inquiries.

**Concluding reflections**

My research journey was rich and challenging for me as a facilitator, researcher and
learner. By choosing to co-learn with my participants about colonization in my own
neighbourhood, I learned to decolonize some of my own understandings of Vancouver and
learned about my own limits as a facilitator. For the other participants, the study group was an
opportunity to learn about their neighbourhood, connect with people and join my invitation to
learn about colonization locally.

As predominately non-Indigenous learners participating in decolonizing place-based
pedagogies, we began to understand local histories in greater depth. This approach to teaching
about (de)-colonization appears to have potential in opening up dialogues about both past and
present day intercultural community relationships. Locating these educational practices in a
specific community (Kitsilano) with a specific community organization (Kits House) encouraged dialogues to focus on concrete actions our group could take to learn more about history, colonization and decolonization. In essence this action based, decolonizing place-based pedagogical study was a first step to ask others in my neighbourhood what we can do to decolonize Kitsilano.

As I reflect back on the process, I am thankful to the many ‘teachers’ I met along the way. Just to name a few these included—research participants, Kits House staff, my professors, local writers, and the neighbourhood itself. I am ever more convinced that there is no rigid division between teacher and learner in decolonizing pedagogies and that if my experience is representative of this educational field, each person has something to teach and learn about our collective need to decolonize in our place of habitation. In closing this study, I am still left with many questions as I continue my path as teacher-learner. The biggest unresolved question arising from this study is what do we do, as place-based teacher-learners, when we encounter different worldviews that oppose the assumptions in our decolonizing pedagogies? How do we have open dialogues about these worldviews without imposing a narrowly defined ideology on other learners? Finally, how do we facilitate place-based studies that lead to decolonizing our communities and community relationships? Answers to these questions do not fully reside in my thesis, but will emerge as I and other learners continue research in the field of decolonizing place based-pedagogies.
References


Roy, S. (2006/07). “Who were these mysterious people?” č̓əsna:m, the Marpole Midden, and the dispossession of the aboriginal lands in British Columbia. *BC Studies, 125*, 67-95.


Appendices

Appendix A: Interview protocol

I am asking you to participate in this interview to reflect on what and how you learned about history during the Forgotten Histories research project. I am interested in hearing more about your understanding of local history, how history shapes current relationships among community members and how Kits House could acknowledge different histories in its new building.

This interview is meant to be an informal reflection and discussion. Please feel free to talk about what is most important to you. The following questions are meant to help guide our conversation; however, we may also talk about other topics during the interview. Please remember that you’re not required to answer all of the questions.

To begin I have a few questions to help us reflect on the study group:

1. What motivated you to join the Forgotten Histories study group? How did you choose your history topic? Were there other topics you wanted to research?
2. What’s your relationship to Kitsilano? Have you lived in the neighbourhood? Have you volunteered or participated at Kits House before this study group?
3. Where did you grow up? What do you know about your ancestors or ancestral background?
4. When you think back to the workshops you attended, what do you remember the most? What had you heard about local history before? What did you learn?
5. When you first learned about the history of Snauq and the Kitsilano Indian Reserve what was your reaction? What about čəsnaʔəm (“Tsusnahm”) and the Marpole Midden?
6. What else have you learned while participating in this study group? What did you learn during your independent research?
7. I’m going to ask you what you associate with several words. It is okay if you don’t have any associations, but if you do, please share them with me. First, when you hear the word ‘colonization’ what images, thoughts or feelings come to mind? Is there anything specific to Vancouver?
8. When you hear the word ‘reconciliation’ what images, thoughts or feelings come to you?
9. Another word some people use is ‘decolonization’, what, if anything, do you associate with this word?

10. How would you describe current relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples in Vancouver?

11. How do you think Kits House could use history and learning about history to open up community relationships? What histories could be acknowledged in the new building? What role could learning history play in reconciling intercultural differences in Westside neighbourhoods?

12. If you were to participate in a similar study group again, what else would you like to learn about local histories? What would you like to do differently?

13. Do you have any recommendations on how I could lead similar workshops in the future?

14. Do you have other reflections you would like to share with me?
Appendix B: Resource books used in workshops


I brought this book to the second workshop as it included a chapter on Kitsilano history. It included some description of non-Western European immigrant history in the neighbourhood including a description of the first Sikh temple built in the area.


I used the maps (pre-1880’s to 1980’s) in this book to spark discussion about the displacement of Indigenous peoples in Vancouver. The first map in the book includes Indigenous place names, villages and harvesting grounds. Of all the books listed here, this was the most widely used in the three workshops.


I brought this book to the second workshop because participants wanted to know more about Khahtsahlano, the namesake of Kitsilano. It includes conversations between Major Matthews, a former City of Vancouver Archivist, and Khahtsahlano.


I used this book as an example of a neighbourhood history that included some acknowledgement of Musqueam peoples in the Dunbar area. The book begins with a *First People* chapter and makes reference to Musqueam peoples in several places in the book. Although not a radical retelling of history by any means, it did provide a starting point for the participants to imagine re-telling Kitsilano histories.

I used this book as a quick reference guide to look up place names that arose during the workshops. This book included a short description of Snauq.
Appendix C: Consent form

Learning Forgotten Histories of the Westside

Who is conducting the study?
Principal Investigator
Pierre Walter, Associate Professor, Department of Educational Studies, UBC

Co-Investigator
Elizabeth Henry, M.A. Student, Department of Educational Studies, UBC

This research project is being undertaken as part of Elizabeth Henry’s graduate thesis research and will be included in a publicly accessible thesis.

Study Purpose:
We are conducting this study to better understand how people learn about neighbourhood history, especially ignored, forgotten and erased histories including Aboriginal, immigrant and settler histories. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you are an adult at Kits House who is interested in local history and would like to learn more about your neighbourhood history. You may also be interested in how Kits House could display and share local histories in its new building.

What will happen during the study?
If you consent to take part in this study, you will be asked to participate in a series of three dialogues with other participants. Each dialogue will be approximately two hours, and if you consent, will be video taped. The following describes what will happen at the dialogues; however, this schedule may change over the course of the study. At the first dialogue, participants will bring a photo or an object related to neighbourhood history and will share a story about their photo or object. Elizabeth Henry, the Co-Investigator will also share photos or a movie about Aboriginal history at the dialogue. After the first dialogue, you will be encouraged,
but not required, to research local history for a new neighbourhood map. This independent study will take approximately three hours between the first and second dialogue.

At the second dialogue participants will draw or collage visual maps that represent some neighbourhood history. At the third dialogue participants will develop an action plan for sharing local history in the new Kits House building. If you consent, the Co-Investigator will facilitate and observe the three dialogues and will take notes about the dialogue that will be kept in a locked filling cabinet. Your identity will be kept confidential in these observation notes. All recorded video footage will be kept on a password-protected computer and will only be viewed by the Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator and possibly the research participants.

After the three dialogues you will be invited, but not required, to participate in an interview. This interview will last approximately one hour and will be an opportunity for you to reflect on what you have learned about local history during the dialogues. If you consent, your interview will be recorded using an audio recorder. Your identity will be kept confidential and the audio recording will be stored in a password-protected computer.

**How will the research results be shared?**

The results of this study will be shared with participants through a two-hour follow up meeting where the Co-Investigator will present initial study results. Participants will be invited, but not required, to participate in this meeting and to provide feedback on the results. If you consent, this meeting will be audio recorded and the recording will be kept on a password-protected computer. Written versions of the results will be made available to those unable to attend the meeting.

The final study results will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be published in journal articles and books. Through the dissemination of the results, other community educators may learn how to teach about history, especially ignored, forgotten and erased histories. As well Kits House members and staff will have a better understanding of some of their local neighbourhood history.
Potential Risks
If you choose to participate in this study, we do not foresee you will be exposed to anything harmful. You may learn history that could upset you or you may be asked questions that are challenging; however, you are not required to answer any of the interview questions nor are you required to remain in the dialogue sessions. We will provide you with a list of affordable or no cost counseling services in case you experience emotional distress during or after the study.

Potential Benefits
By participating in this study you will have an opportunity to learn more about your neighbourhood history and to reflect on your own understanding of local histories. You will also contribute to a better understanding of how people learn forgotten, ignored and erased histories.

Confidentiality:
Your confidentiality will be respected in the study and in the dissemination of results. Information that discloses your identity will not be released without your consent, unless required by law. At any point in the study, if you reveal that there has been an incident that involves abuse and/or neglect of a child or an elderly person (or that there is a risk of such occurring) please be advised that the researchers must, by law, report this information to the appropriate authorities. All study documents will be identified only by code number or pseudonym and kept on a computer that is password-protected. Subjects will not be identified by their real name in any reports of the completed study unless they request to be identified.

Will you be paid to take part in this study?
We will not pay you for the time you take to be in this study. However, we will provide food at each dialogue session. A gift card of $30 will be provided to you at the end of the study to thank you for your participation.

Who can you contact for information about the study?
Please contact Elizabeth Henry with any questions.
Who can you contact if you have complaints or concerns about the study?

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research subject and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact the Research Subject Information Line in the UBC Office of Research Services at 604-822-8598 or if long distance e-mail RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.
Please keep this copy for your records.

Consent:

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your access to further services at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House.

I have read and retained a copy of this consent form and I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to participate in this research study under the conditions outlined in this consent form:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be video-tapped during my participation in the three dialogue sessions:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be audio-tapped if asked to participate in an interview for this study:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be audio-tapped in the follow-up meeting on research findings:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

__________________________________________________________

Participant Signature Date

__________________________________________________________

Printed Name of the Participant signing above
Consent:
Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative impact on your access to further services at Kitsilano Neighbourhood House.

I have read and retained a copy of this consent form and I have had any questions answered to my satisfaction:
Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to participate in this research study under the conditions outlined in this consent form:
Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be video-tapped during my participation in the three dialogue sessions:
Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be audio-tapped if asked to participate in an interview for this study:
Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

I consent to be audio-tapped in the follow-up meeting on research findings:
Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

Participant Signature ___________________________ Date ___________________________

Printed Name of the Participant signing above ___________________________